

A Saint indeed;

OR, THE

GREAT WORK

OF A

CHRISTIAN

OPENED AND PRESSED FROM

PROV. IV. xxiii.

BEING

A seasonable and proper Expedient for the Recovery
of the much decayed Power of GODLINESS among
the Professors of these Times.

By JOHN FLAVEL, Minister of the Gospel.

Unusquisque a Deo constitutus est sui cordis tanquam castris custos & defensor contra suos Hostes. Si ergo non implorato auxilio, non expectato succursu, dico ad primam absidionis castrametationem castrum tradat hosti, crimen admitti prodicionis manifestum: quid igitur dicendum de traditione clavium hujus castris antequam absidione prematur? clavis est cogitatio hæc enim cor aperit; cogitationem volvere est clavem cordis ad apertionem, ipsius torquere ut tandem referatur. Ames. de Conscien. p. 154.

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T O T H E

R E A D E R.

READER, if you are one of those whose Hearts are not converted to the Lord, I beseech you, I entreat you, I beseech you, seriously consider the dreadfulneſs of your condition, you are now an enemy to God, and as ſuch, ſubject to his everlaſting wrath. If you imagine you are not an enemy to God, I requeſt you to anſwer theſe Queſtions.

Have you received Chriſt for your prophet, as ſuch is to illuminate your underſtanding, to diſcern the preferableneſs, propriety and beauty of heavenly things, and to underſtand the true meaning of the Scripture?

Have you received him in this manner, if this be not the caſe, are you of an humble teachable diſpoſition, willing to learn?

a

Have



(iv)

Have you received him for your priest, his office as such, is to atone for your manifold transgressions of God's righteous law, and continually to offer his blood with your prayers, to render them a sweet smelling savour to God. Ephes. v. 2. For he is a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedeck. Psal. cx. 4.

Have you received him in this manner, can you say when you sin that you have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous. 1 John ii. 1. And have you received him for your King? His office as such, is to provide for you, protect you, and command you. Do you rely upon him every day for a supply of your wants as well spiritual as temporal, do you trust to him to be your shield and defence against all your enemies as well internal as external, do you yield him a chearful obedience?

Have you respect to all his commandments. Psal. cxix. 6. Are all his ways to you ways of pleasantness, and all his paths peace. Prov. iii. 17. Are you as willing to obey Christ as your King as you are willing to be saved by him as your Priest; and lastly, do you desire and do you endeavour, that your will may be brought into a subserviency to God's holy will in all things?

If you can by experience answer in the affirmative to the Questions, you are clear of the charge of being God's enemy, but if you cannot, the Scriptures declare what you are, and likewise your doom; "But those mine enemies which I would not that I should reign over them, bring them and slay them before me. Luke xix. 27."

If you are not awakened to the belief of this passage, I refer you to a serious perusal of the following, and take them to yourself for they belong to you, and will be executed upon you if you die in the state which you now are in: "I will whet my sword, I have bent my bow and made it ready. I have also prepared for them the instruments of death. Psal. vii. 12. For if I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me, and will make mine arrows drunk with blood. Deut. xxxii. 41. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Gal. iii. 10. And the soul that sinneth it shall die. Ezek. xviii. 4. And there is no way to escape these threatenings, but by fleeing to Christ by faith. For he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but

he that believeth not shall be damned. Mar.
 xvi. 16. And this faith is always preceeded by
 repentance, and accompanied with a change of
 the whole man. The person's understanding
 enlightened in some measure to discern the things
 which belong to his everlasting peace, his will
 brought to abhor the ways of sin and Satan, and
 to chuse God for his exceeding great reward.
 Gen. xv. 1. His affections are in some measure
 drawn off from the things of this world, and set
 on things above. Col. iii. 2. And through a close
 and earnest walk with God, and a careful watch
 over his heart, he will enjoy peace to himself
 and live a life to the glory of God. But through
 the deceitfulness of the heart, through the power
 of in-dwelling sin, and through the temptations of
 the world, the flesh, and the Devil, his affections
 are often drawn off from spiritual things, to the
 great discomfort of himself, and the great disho-
 nour of his profession. To prevent which, is
 the great duty of keeping the heart with all dili-
 gence commanded, if you be somewhat seriously
 inclined. You may perhaps, through ignorance
 endeavour to keep your heart without the above
 mentioned change, but I assure you it will be to
 no purpose; for it is impossible to keep the heart
 with

with God, if it was never given to him. There-
 fore in the first place, see that you give up your
 heart to God, endeavour to do it: be serious and
 constant in all the means of grace which he has
 appointed, that you may obtain grace to enable
 you to give yourself wholly up to his disposal:
 which means are reading his word, hearing it
 preached, meditation and prayer; and when you
 are enabled to give your heart to God, through
 his blessing, and your own diligence, This book
 will be to you of excellent use. But Reader,
 you are one of those whose hearts are given
 to the Lord, why do you not live more in the
 sweetness of Religion? why do you not live
 more to the glory of God? why do you not let
 your light shine so before men, that they may
 see your good works, and glorify your Father
 which is in heaven. Mat. v. 16. It is because
 you do not obey this great duty of keeping the
 heart with all diligence, but you abate your
 watch, then Satan takes the advantage, and
 makes rude work with you. Saint Paul writing
 to the Galatians, speaketh to them of the spirit of
 adoption, and faith, Because you are sons, God
 hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your
 hearts, crying, Abba Father. Gal. iv. 6. Have
 you

you received the spirit of adoption? have you that freeness with God which becometh those which are adopted into his family? As he is your spiritual Father, have you a filial fear, humble confidence, and ardent affection towards him, as becometh his children, or instead thereof are you not kept under a spirit of servility, the latter be your case, if you would be rid of such irksome burden, as I am certain it must be. I desire you to use the means which is offered you in this excellent book, and through the blessing of God upon it, I doubt not, but you will be freed from this spirit of servility, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rom. viii. 28.

As to the Author it seems, he was a man of sound judgment, unexemplary piety, and ardent affection: His husbandry spirituallized, I can but admire. His fountain of life opened is likewise an excellent book, and I greatly wish this valuable little gem was interwoven with the texture of the hearts of all that call themselves Christians: then would Christianity be adorned with that estimable jewel, practical godliness; through the want of which, it is disrobed of its greatest ornament. Then would Christians enjoy that va-

le treasure-affurance, which would cause them
 live as it were a heaven upon earth, through
 the want of which they savour but little of the
 sweets of Christianity. To the contribution of
 which, is my principle design in reviving it. I
 hope some charitable Christians who have ability,
 and especially ministers, will distribute it among
 their neighbours, and poor people, especially their
 auditors, where they have some reason to hope
 there is a work of grace begun, and that it may
 produce the above-mentioned effects, viz. Free-
 dom of spirit, pleasure in Religion, and a holy
 life; which through the blessing of God and
 our sincere endeavours, it will not fail of. This
 reader, is the sincere desire of one, who is your
 eternal, internal, and eternal well-wisher in
 Christ,

April 22. 1768.

S. J.



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T H E

Epistle Dedicatory.

to my dearly beloved and longed for, the Folk
of *Jesus Christ* in *Dartmouth*, over whom the
Holy Ghost hath made me an overseer, sound
Judgment, true Zeal, and unstained Purity, is
heartly wished.

My Dear Friends,

THere are Three Sad Sights with which our Eyes
should continually affect our Hearts. The
First is, To behold in every place so many pro-
fane and desolute ones who bear the very Image of Sa-
tan; the Face of whose Conversation plainly discovers
that they are, and whither they are going, *Philip. 3.*
19. These look like themselves, the Children of
Wrath: The second is, To see so many cursed Hypocrites
artificially disguising themselves, and with marvellous
exterity acting the parts of Saints, so that even a judi-
cious Eye may sometimes mistake the *Similar Workings*
of the Spirit on them, for his saving workings on others:
To hear such a Person conferring, praying, bewailing his
corruptions; and talking of his experiences, would easily
persuade a Man to believe, that he hath the Heart, as
well as the Face of a sincere Christian: For,

Sic Oculus, sic ille Manus, sic Ora ferebat.

So the People of God do speak, so they pray, and
even so they open their conditions: These look like
A Saints,

Saints, but are none. The Third is to see so many Saints in whom the spirit of Truth is, who get through the impetuous workings of their Corruptions, and neglecting of the wrath over their Hearts, do often fall in to such scandalous Practices, that they look like Hypocrites, though they are not so.

These are three Sad Sights indeed, and Oh that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes Fountains of Tears that I might weep abundantly over them all!

For the first I would mourn heartily, considering that they (so continuing) must be damned eternally, 2 *Th* 1. 8. 9. 1 *Cor* 6. 9

For the second, I would both weep and tremble, considering that they (so abiding) must be damned doubly, *Matth.* 24. 51.

And for the third, no less than any of the rest, because though they themselves may and shall be saved, yet they themselves make fast the Bonds of Death upon both the former; *Matth.* 18. 7. 2 *Sam* 12. 13. 14.

Alas! that ever they should shed the Blood of other Souls, for whom Christ shed his own Blood! that ever they should be *cruel* to others, who have found Christ so *kind* to them! I know they dare not do it directly and intentionally, but so it proves occasionally and eventually: Suffer me here to digress a little, and expostulate with these prejudiced and hardened Souls, I will presently return to you again. O why do you mischief your own souls by other Men's Examples? Because they stumble and break their Shins, will you fall and break your Necks? I desire all such as harden themselves by these things and take up a good Opinion of their own deplorable Condition, would soberly consider and answer the Three Queries.

1. *Qu.* Doth Religion any way countenance or patronize the sinful practices of its professors, or doth it not rather impartially and severely condemn them? It is the Glory of the Christian Religion that it is pure and undefiled, *Ja.* 1. 21. no Doctrine so holy, *Psal.* 10. 8. or doth any make more Provision for an holy Life, *1st.* 2. 11, 12. Indeed there is a Case wherein we may charge the evil Practices of Men upon their Principles, but that is when their Practices naturally flow from, and necessarily follow their Principles: As for example, If I see a Papist sin boldly, I may charge it upon his Principles; for they set Pardons to sale, and make way for Looseness. If I see an Arminian slight the Grace of God, and proudly advance himself, I may cry shame upon his Principles, which directly lead to it: But can I do so where such Practices are condemned and provided against by their own avowed principles that commit them?

2. *Qu.* Is it not a most irrational thing to let fly at Religion because of the scandalous ways of some, whilst in the mean time you wholly slight and overlook the Holy and Heavenly conversations of many others? Are all that profess Godliness loose and careless in their Lives? Nay, some are an Ornament to their profession and the Glory of Christ: And why must the innocent be condemned with the Guilty? Why the eleven for one *Judas*?

3. *Qu.* If you condemn Religion because of the scandalous Lives of some that profess it, must you not then cast off all Religion in the world, and turn downright Atheists? Surely this is the consequence of it: For what Religion is there, but some that profess it, walk contrary to their Profession: And then, as *Con-*

stantine told the *Novatian*, you must set up your Ladder and go to Heaven by yourself.

But alas! it is not our printed Apologies for Religion, but the visible Reformation of its Professors that must both save its Honour, and remove those fatal stumbling blocks at which the blind World strikes and falls into Eternal Perdition.

Now there are two ways by which this may be effected: First, by convincing the Consciences of Professors of the miscarriages, and the evil and aggravation of them. Secondly, By meditating the Heart, and cleansing the Fountain whence they proceed: In the first of these, a worthy and eminent Servant of Christ

hath lately laboured, holding a clear
See Gospel-Glass. Gospel-Glass before the Faces of Professors, which truly represents their

Spots and Blemishes. If he that reads it will consider, apply, and practice, it shall doubtless turn to his Salvation, but if it turn to no good account to him that reads it, I know it shall turn to a Testimony for him that wrote it. The Second is, A principal design of this small Treatise, the Subject whereof is exceeding weighty, and of daily use to the people of God, though the manner of handling it be attended with many defects and weaknesses: Every one cannot be excellent who yet may be useful.

I will exercise your Patience no longer than whilst I tell you.

1. Why I published it to the view of the World.
2. Why I direct it particularly to you.

First, For the publication of it, take this sincere and brief account, that as I was led to this Subject by

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EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

v

special providence, so to the publication of it by a kind of Necessity: The Providence at first leading me to it as this, A dear and choice Friend of my intimate acquaintance being under much inward trouble upon the account of some special Heart disorder, open'd the case to me and earnestly requested some Rules and helps in that particular; whilst I was bending my thoughts to that special Case, divers other cases of like importance (some of which where dependant upon that consideration) occurred to my thoughts, and this Scripture which I have insisted upon, presented itself as a Foundation for the Whole Discourse, which being strengthened out to what you see, divers Friends requested me to transcribe for their Use divers of the Cases here handled, and some others begged me to publish the whole, to which I was in a manner necessitated to save the pains of transcribing, which to me is a very tedious and tiresome Work: And just as I had almost finished the Copy, an Opportunity presented (and that somewhat strangely) to make it public. So that from first to last I have been carried beyond my first Intentions in this thing. *Object.* If any say, the World is even cloyed with books, and therefore though the Discourse be necessary, yet the publication is needless.

Sol. 1. I Answer, There are multitudes of Books indeed, and of them many concern not themselves about Root Truths, and Practical Godliness, but spend their strength upon impracticable Notions, and frivolous Controversies: Many also strike at Root-truths and endeavour to undermine the Power of Godliness: And some there are that nourish the Root, and tend to clear and confirm, to prepare and apply the great Truths of the Gospel, that they may be Bread for souls to live and feed on: Now, though I could wish that those that have

handled the Pen of the Scribe, had better employe their time and pains than to obtrude such useles Discour upon the World, yet for Books of the latter Rank say, that when Husbandmen complain of the much Corn, let Christians complain of two many such Books.

2. And if you be so highly conceited of your own furniture and ability, that such Books are needles for you: If you let them alone, they will do you no hurt and other poor hungry Souls will be glad of them and bless God for what you despise and leave.

Object. If it be said that several of the Cases here handled touch not your condition, I answer.

Sol. 1. That which is not your Condition may be anothers Condition. If you be placed in an easy, full and prosperous state, and so have no need of the Help here offered to support your Heart under pinching Wants, others are forced to live by Faith for every day's provision: If you be dandled upon the Knee of Providence, some of your brethren are under its feet. If you have inward Peace, and tranquillity of spirit, and so need not the counsels here given to ward off those desperate conclusions that poor afflicted souls are ready to draw upon themselves at such a time, yet it may be a word in season to them, and they may say as David to Abigail, *Blessed be thou of the Lord, and blessed be thy Advice.*

2 That may be your Condition shortly, which is not your Condition at present: Say not thy Mountain stand strong, thou shalt never be moved: There are changes in the Right-hand of the most High, and then those Truths which are little more esteemed than Hedge fruits will be as Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver: In *Jer.* 10. 11. The Prophet there teaches the Jews (who then dwelt in their own houses) how to defend

send their own Religion in *Babylon*, and what they
 could say to the *Caldeans* there, and therefore that
 is written in *Caldee*. So much for the Reason
 its Publication: Next for the dedication of it to you,
 was induced thereto by the Consideration,

1. Of the relation I have to you above all the Peo-
 ple in the World: I look upon my Gifts as yours;
 my Time as yours, and all the Talents I am intrusted
 with as yours: It is not with you as it is with a Woman
 whose Husband is dead, and so is freed from the Law
 of her Husband, the Relation still continues, and so
 all the mutual Duties of it.

2. By the considerations of my necessitated Absence
 from you, I would not that personal absence should by
 sensible Degrees untwist (as usually it doth) the
 Cord of Friendship; and therefore have endeavour'd
 as absent Friends use to do) to preserve and streng-
 then it by this small remembrance. It was *Vespasian's*
 answer to *Apolonius*, when he desired access for two
 philosophers: *My Doors* (saith *Vespasian*) *are al-*
ways open to Philosophers, but my very Breast is open to
you. I cannot say with him, my Doors are open for
 the free access of Friends, being by a sad Providence shut
 against myself; but this I can say, My very Breast is
 all open to you, you are as dear to me as ever.

3. Another inducement (and indeed the main) was
 the perpetual usefulness and necessity of these Truths
 to you, which you will have continual need of: And
 I know few of you have such happy Memories to re-
 call, and I cannot be always with you to inculcate
 these things, but *litera scripta manet*; I was wil-
 ling to leave this with you as a Legacy, as a Testi-
 mony of sincere Love for, and care over you: This may
 counsel and direct you when I cannot: I may be ren-
 dered useless to you by a civil or natural Death, but

this will out-live me; and Oh! that it it may serve your souls when I am silent in the Dust.

To hasten to a Conclusion, I have only these three requests to you, which I earnestly beseech you not to deny me; yea, I charge you as ever you hope to appear with comfort before the great Shepherd, do not dare to slight these Requests.

1. Above all other studies in the World, study your own Hearts: Waste not a minute more of your precious time about frivolous and senseless Controversies; It is reported even of *Bellarmino* (how truly I examine now

*Quod a studiis scholasticæ Theologiæ
Fuligatus in averteretur fere nauseabundus, quæ
vita Bellarm. niam succo carebant liquide pietatis,* (i. e.

of school divinity, because he wanted the sweet juice of

* *Caput regulatum ille defuit, cor bonum non defuit.*

Piety; I had rather it should be said of you as one said of *Swinkfeldius* (he wanted a regular Head, but not a honest Heart) than that you should have regular Heads, and irregular Hearts.

My dear flock, I have, according to the Grace given me, laboured in the course of my Ministry among you, to feed you with the Heart strengthening Bread of practical Doctrine, and I do assure you, it is far better you should have the sweet and saving impressions of Gospel Truths, feelingly and powerfully conveyed to your Hearts, than only to understand them by a bare ratiocination, or dry syllogistical inference: Leave trifling Studies to such as have time lying on their Hands, and know not how to employ it: Remember you are at the door of eternity, and have other work to do; those hours you spend upon Heart-work in your Closets, are

EPISTLE DEDICATORY. ix

golden spots of all your time, and will have the sweet-
influence in your last hour : Never forget those Ser-
mons I preached to you upon that subject, from 2 *Kings*
2. 3. Heart-work is weighty and difficult work, an-
d there may cost you your Souls : I may say of it,
Augustine speaks of the Doctrine of the Trinity, Ni-
facilius aut periculosius erratur ; a man can err in
nothing more easily or more dangerously : O then study
your Hearts.

2 My next Request is, that you will carefully look
your Conversations, and be accurate in all your ways,
hold forth the Word of Life : Be sure by the strictness
and holiness of your Lives, to settle yourselves in the
Consciences of your Enemies. Remember that
your Lives must be produced in the great Day to judge
the World, 1 *Cor.* 6. 2. Oh then what manner of Per-
sons ought you to be ! You have many Eyes over you,
the Omniscient Eye of God, that searches the Heart
and Reins, *Rev.* 2. 23. The vigilant Eye of Satan,
Job. 1. 7. 8. The envious Eye of Enemies, that curi-
ously observes you. *Psal.* 5. 8. The quick and obser-
vant Eye of Conscience, which none of your Actions
can escape, *Rom.* 9. 1.

Oh then be precise, and accurate in all manner of
Conversation : Keep up the power of Godliness in your
Societies and *Families*, and then you will not let it fall
in your meer public Employments and converses in the
World ; I have often told you, that it is the honour of
the Gospel, that it makes the best Parents and Chil-
dren, the best Masters and servants, the best husbands
and wives in the world.

My third and last Request is, that you pray for me :
I hope I can say and am sure some of you have acknow-
ledged, that I came at first among you, as the Return
and Answer of your Prayers : And indeed so it should

be, see *Luke* 10. 2. I am perswaded also, I have been carried on in my work by your Prayers: 'Tis sweet when 'tis so, see *Eph.* 6. 18. 19. And I hope by your prayers to receive yet a further benefit, even that which is mentioned, *Heb.* 13. 18, 19. *Philem.* 22. And truly 'tis but equal you should pray for me, I have often prayed for you, let the Pulpit, Family and Church witness for me: And God forbid I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.

Yea Friends, your own interest may persuade to what mercies you obtain for me redound to your own Advantage; if God preserve me, it is for your Use and Service: The more Gifts and Graces a Minister has the better for them that shall wait on his Ministry. The more God gives in to me, the more I shall be able to give out to you. I will detain you no longer, but to entreat you to accept this small Testification of my great Love, and have Recourse to it, according as the Exigencies of your Condition shall require: Read it consideringly, and obediently: Judge it not by the dress and style, but by the weight and favour of what you read. 'Tis a good Rule of *Bernard*, *In legendis libris non quæremus scientem, sed saporem*, (i. e.) in reading Books, regard not so much the Science, as the Savour. That it may prove the Savour of Life unto Life to you, and all those into whose hands it shall come, is my hearty Desire of

Your loving and faithful Pastor,

JOHN FLAVEL

From my Study at
Ley in Slapton,
Octob. 7, 1667.

A

Saint Indeed, &c.

Prov. IV. 23.

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence, for out of it are the Issues of Life.

THE Heart of Man is his worst Part before it be Regenerate, and the best afterwards; it is the Seat of Principles and Fountain of Actions. The Eye of God is, and the Eye of the Christian ought to be principally fixed upon it.

The greatest difficulty in Conversion is to win the Heart to God, and the greatest difficulty after Conversion is to keep the Heart with God. Here lies the very strength and stress of Religion; here's that that makes the way to Life a narrow way, and the Gate of Heaven a strait Gate. Direction and help in this great Work is the scope and sum of this Text; wherein we have,

1. An Exhortation, Keep thy Heart with all Diligence.

2. The Reason or Motive inforcing it, For out of it are the Issues of Life.

In the Exhortation I shall consider.

1. The Matter of the Duty.

2. The Manner of performing it.

1. The

1. The Matter of the Duty, Keep thy Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the Body which the Philosophers call the *primivivens*, & *ultimum moriens*; the first that lives, and last that dies; but by Heart in a Metaphor, the Scriptures sometimes understand some particular noble Faculty of the soul. In Rom. 1. 21. it is put for the understanding part, their foolish Heart, (i. e.) the foolish understanding was darkened. And Psalm 111. it is put for the Memory, Thy word have I hid in my Heart. And John i. 3, 10. It is put for the Conscience, which hath in it both the light of understanding, and the recognitions of the memory. If our Heart condemn us, (i. e.) if our Conscience whose proper office it is to condemn. But here we are to take it more generally for the whole Soul, inner Man; for look what the Heart is to the Body that the Soul is to the Man; and what Health is to the Heart, that Holiness is to the Soul; *Quod sanitas in corpore, id sanctitas in corde*. The state of the whole Body depends upon the soundness and vigour of the Heart, and the everlasting State of the whole Man, upon the good or ill Condition of the Soul.

And by keeping the Heart, understand the diligent and constant Use and Improvement of all holy Means and Duties, to preserve the Soul from Sin, and maintain a sweet and free communion with God, * *Lavator in loco* will have the word taken from a besieged garrison, b

* I say constant, for the reason added in the Text, *et semper* tends the duty to all the states and conditions of a Christian's Life, and makes it bind *ad semper*; If the Heart must be kept, because out of it are the issues of life, the as long as these issues of life do flow out of it, we are obliged to keep it.

by many Enemies without, and in danger of being
 ayed by treacherous Citizens within; in which dan-
 the Soldiers upon pain of Death are commanded to
 ch; and whereas the Expression, (keep thy Heart)
 ns to put it upon us as our work; yet it does not
 ly a sufficiency or ability in us to do it; we are as
 to stop the Sun in its Course, or to make the Rivers
 backward, as by our own skill and power to rule and
 er our Hearts; we may as well be our own Saviours,
 our own keepers, and yet Solomon speaks properly
 ough, when he saith, keep thy Heart; because the
 y is ours, though the power be God's. A natural
 hath no power, a gracious man hath some; tho' not
 cient; and that power he hath, depends upon the
 iting and assisting strength of Christ; Gratia Gratiam
 ulat, Grace within us, is beholding to Grace without
 John 15. 5. Without me you can do nothing. So
 ch of the Matter of the Duty.

2. The manner of performing it is, With all diligence;
 Hebrew is very emphatical, cum omni custodia, keep
 h all keeping, q. d. keep, keep; set double guards,
 r hearts will be gone else. And this vehemency of
 ession with which the duty is urged, plainly implies
 y difficult it is to keep our hearts, and how dangerous
 et them go.

3. The Reason or Motive quickening to this Duty
 very forcible and weighty, for out of it are the Issues
 Life; that is, it is the Source and Fountain of all
 al Actions and Operations; Hinc fons boni & pecandi
 go, saith Jerom, it is the spring and original both of
 od and Evil, as the spring in a Watch that sets all the
 wheels in motion. The Heart is the Treasury, the
 and and Tongue but the Shops, what is in these came
 m thence, the Hand and Tongue always began
 where

where the Heart ends. The Heart contrives, the Members execute, Luke 6. 46. A good Man out of the good Treasury of his Heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil Man out of the evil Treasury of his Heart bringeth forth evil things, for out of the abundance of his Heart his Mouth speaketh. So then if the heart err in its work, these must needs miscarry theirs; for Heart-errors are like the Errors of the Press-concoction which cannot be rectified afterwards; like the misplacing and Inverting of the Stamps and Letters in the Press, which must needs cause so many Errata's in all the Copies that are printed off. Oh how important a Duty is that which is contained in the following proposition?

Doct. That the keeping and right managing of the Heart in every Condition, is the great business of Christian Life.

What the Philosopher saith of Waters, is as properly applicable to Hearts, Suis Terminis difficile continetur 'tis hard to keep them within any bounds: God hath set Bounds and Limits to them, yet how frequently they transgress, not only the bounds of Grace and Religion, but even of Reason and common Honesty; labor, hoc opus est, this is that which affords the Christian Matter of labour, fear and trembling to the dying day. 'Tis not the cleansing of the Hand that makes a Christian, for many a Hypocrite can shew as fair a hand as he, but the purifying, watching and ordering of the heart; this is the thing that provokes many sad Complaints, and cost so many deep groans and brinish Tears. 'Twas the Pride of Hezekiah's Heart that made him lie in the Dust mourning before the Lord, 2. Chron 32. 26. 'Twas the Love of Hypocrisy invading the Heart, that made David cry, Let my Heart be found in thy statutes, that I

shamed, Psal. 119. 80. 'Twas the sad Experience
of the divisions and distractions of his own Heart
in the Service of God, that made him pour out that
Prayer, Psal. 86. 11. Unite my Heart to fear thy

Method in which I shall improve the Point shall
be this.

First, I shall inquire what the keeping of the Heart
supposes and imports.

Secondly, Assign divers Reasons why Christians
must make this the great Work and Business of their
lives.

Thirdly, Point at those special Seasons which es-
pecially call for this diligence in keeping the Heart.

Fourthly and Lastly, Apply the whole in several
cases.

What the keeping of the heart supposes and im-
ports.

To keep the Heart necessarily supposes a previous
Work of Sanctification; which hath set the heart right
by giving it a new spiritual bent and inclination, for as
long as the heart is not set right by Grace as to its ha-
bitual frame, no Duties or Means can keep it right with
God. Self is the poise of the unsanctified heart, which
carries and moves it in all its Designs and Actions, and
as long as it is so, it is impossible that any external means
could keep it with God.

Man by Creation was of one constant uniform frame
and tenure of Spirit, held one strait and even course;
of one thought or faculty ravell'd or disorder'd, his
mind had a perfect illumination to understand and
know the will of God, his will a perfect compliance
therewith, his sensitive appetite and other inferior pow-
ers stood in a most obedient subordination.

Man

Man by Degeneration is become a most disorderd and rebellious Creature, contesting with and opposing his Maker, as the first cause, by self dependance; the chiefeft good, by self love, as the highest Law, by self-will, and as the last end, by self-seeking, so is quite disorderd, and all his acts irregular: illuminated understanding is clouded with ignorance, his complying will full of rebellion and stubbornness, subordinate power, casting off the dominion and government of the superior faculties.

But by Regeneration this disorderd soul is set right again, Sanctification being the rectifying and due ordering, or as the Scripture phrases it, the renovation of the Soul after the Image of God, Eph. 4. 24. in which self-dependance is removed by Faith, self-love by the love of God, self-will, by subjection and obedience to the will of God, and self seeking, by self-denial. The darkned understanding is again illuminated, Eph. 1. 18. the refractory Will sweetly subdued, 1 Tim. 1. 10. 3. the rebellious appetite, of concupiscence, gradually conquered, Rom 6. 7. per tot. And thus the Soul which sin had universally depraved, is again by grace restored and rectified.

This being presupposed, it will not be difficult to apprehend, what it is to keep the Heart, which is nothing else but the constant care and diligence of such a renewed Man, to preserve his Soul in that holy Frame to which grace hath reduced it, and daily strives to maintain it.

For though Grace hath in great measure rectified the Soul, and given it an habitual and heavenly Temper, yet Sin often actually discomposes it again, so that even a gracious Heart is like a musical Instrument which though it be never so exactly tuned, a small

ings it out of tune again; yea, hang it aside but a
e, and it will need setting again, before you can
y another Lesson on it, even so stands the case with
scious Hearts; if they are in frame in one duty, yet
w dull, dead and disordered when they come to a-
her: and therefore every duty needs a particular
paration of the Heart, Job 11. 13. If thou pre-
e thine Heart, and stretch out thine hands towards
n: Well then, to keep the heart, is carefully to
serve it from sin which disorders it; and maintain
t spiritual and gracious frame which fits us for a life
Communion with God, and this includes these six acts
it.

1. First, frequent observation of the frame of the
art, turning in and examining how the case stands
th it, this is one part of the work. Carnal and formal
ersons take no heed to this; they cannot be brought
confer with their own Hearts; there are some Men
d Women that have lived forty or fifty years in the
orld, and have scarce had one hour's discourse with
eir own Hearts all that while: 'Tis an hard thing to
ing a Man and himself together upon such an ac-
ount; but Saints know those soliloquies and Self-con-
ferences to be of excellent Use and advantage. The
eathen could say, Anima sedendo & quiescendo fit
pines, the Soul is made wise by sitting still in quiet-
ss; though Bankrupts care not to look in their Books
Accompt, yet upright Hearts will know whether they
o backward or forward, Psal. 77. 6. I commune with
ine own heart; The Heart can never be kept, untill
s case be examined and understood.

2. It includes deep Humiliation for heart evils and
sorders; thus Hezekiah humbled himself for the
ride of his Heart, 2 Chron. 32. 26. Thus the Peo-
ple

ple were order'd to spread forth their hands to God in prayer, in the sense of the Plague of their own Heart 1 Kings 8. 38. Upon this account many an upright Heart hath been laid low before God: O what a Heart have I? They have in their Confessions pointed at the Heart, the pained Place, Lord here is the Wound here is the Plague-sore; it is with the Heart well kept as it is with the Eye, which is a fit Emblem of it; a small dust get into the Eye, it will never leave twinkling and watering till it have wept it out: So the upright heart cannot be at rest till it have wept out its Troubles, and poured out its Complaints before the Lord.

3. It includes earnest Supplications and instant Prayer for Heart purifying, and rectifying Grace, when Sin hath defiled and disordered it: So Psalm 119. 1 Cleanse thou me from secret faults; and Psalm 86. 1 Unite my Heart to fear thy name. Saints have always many such petitions depending before the throne of Grace; this is the thing which is most pleaded by them with God; when they are praying for outward Mercies, haply their Spirits may be more remiss, but when it comes to the Heart ease, then they exert their Spirits to the utmost, fill their Mouths with Arguments, weep and make Supplication; O for a better Heart! Oh for a Heart to Love God more! To hate Sin more, to walk more evenly with God. Lord deny not to me such a Heart, what ever thou deny me; give me a heart to fear thee, love and delight in thee, if I beg my Bread in desolate Places. 'Tis observed of holy Mr. Bradford, that when he was confessing Sin he would never give over confessing until he had felt some brokenness of Heart for that sin: and when praying for any spiritual mercy, would never give over

Suit, till he had got some relish of that Mercy ; is the third Thing included in keeping the Heart.

It includes the imposing of strong Engagements Bonds upon ourselves to walk more accurately with , and avoid the Occasions whereby the Heart may be induced to Sin : Well composed, advised, and deliberate Vows are in some cases of excellent Use to keep the Heart against some special Sin : So *Job 31*. I made a Covenant with mine Eyes ; by this means men have over awed their Souls, and preserved themselves from defilement by some special Heart-temptations.

It includes a constant, holy Jealousy over our own hearts, quick-sighted, self Jealousy is an excellent preventive from Sin ; he that will keep his Heart, must keep the Eyes of his Soul awake, and open upon all disorderly and tumultuous stirrings of his Affections, when Affections break loose, and the Passions be stirred, the Soul must discover and suppress them before they rise to an height : O my Soul, dost thou well in this ? amidst tumultuous Thoughts and Passions, where is your submission ? State viri, quæ causa viæ, quive estis armis ? Virg.

Happy is the Man that thus feareth always, *Prov. 28*.

By this fear of the Lord it is that Men depart from security, shake off Security, and Preserve themselves from sin ; he that will keep his Heart must feed with Fear, rejoice with Fear, and pass the whole Time of his sojourning here in Fear, and all little enough to keep the Heart from Sin.

And lastly, to add no more, it includes the retaining of God's Presence with us, and setting the Lord before us ; this the People of God, have found regular means to keep their Hearts upright, and awe

them from Sin: When the Eye of our Faith is fixt upon the Eye of God's Omniscience, we dare not put out our thoughts and affections to vanity: Holy Joseph durst not suffer his Heart to yield to an impure Thought; and what was it that moved him to so great Circumspection? Why, he tells you, *Job* 31. Doth he not see my Ways, and count all my Steps? I will Walk before me (saith God to Abraham) and be perfect, *Gen* 17. 1. Even as Parents use to set their Children in the Congregation before them, knowing that else they will be toying and playing; so would the Heart of the best Man too, were it not for the Eye of God.

In these and such like particulars, do gracious Spirits express the Care they have of their Hearts; they are as careful to prevent the breaking loose of their Corruptions in times of Temptation, as Seamen are to bind fast the Guns, that they break not loose in a Storm; as careful to preserve the Sweetness and Comfort they have got from God in any Duty, as one that comes out of an hot Bath, or great Sweat, is of taking of care by going forth into the chill Air: This is the Work and of all Works in Religion it is the most difficult, constant and important Work.

I. 'Tis the hardest work; Heart-work is hard indeed: To shuffle over Religious Duties with a careless and heedless Spirit, will cost no great pains, but to stand thyself before the Lord, and tie up thy loose and wandering thoughts to a constant and serious attendance upon God that will cost thee something; to attain a facility and dexterity of Language in Prayer, and put thy meanings into apt and decent Expressions is easy; but to get the Heart broken for Sin whilst thou art blessing God, and to be really ashamed and humbled through the apprehension

ensions of God's infinite Holiness, and to keep Heart in this Frame, not only in, but after Duty, surely cost thee some Groans, and travelling pains Soul, to express the outward acts of Sin, and com- the external Part of thy Life in a laudable and nely Manner, is no great Matter, even carnal Per- by the force of common Principles can do this; to kill the root of Corruption within, to set and keep an holy Government over thy Thoughts, to have all things lye straight and orderly in the Heart, that is easy.

2. 'Tis a constant Work, the keeping of the Heart such a Work, as is never done, till Life be done; Labour and our Life end together: It is with a Christian in this Business, as it is with Seamen, that sprung a Leak at Sea, if they tug not constantly the Pump, the Water encreases upon them, and quickly sink them: 'Tis in vain for them to say the work is hard, and we are weary: There is no time condition in the Life of a Christian, which will suffer an Intermission of this Work. It is in the keeping, watch over our Hearts, as it was in the keeping up of Moses, his Hands, whilst Israel and Amaleck were fighting below, *Exod.* 17. 12. No sooner do Moses, Hands grow heavy and sink down, but Amaleck prevails. You know it cost David and Peter many a Day and Night for intermitting the Watch over their own Hearts but a few Minutes.

3. 'Tis the most important Business of a Christian's life; without this we are but Formalists in Religion; our Professions, Gifts and Duties signify nothing: My Son give me thine Heart, *Prov.* 23. 26. God is pleased to call that a Gift, which is indeed a Debt; he will put this Honour upon the Creature to receive it from

him in the way of a Gift; but if this be not given him, he regards not whatever else you bring to him: there is so much only of Worth and Value in what he do as, there is of heart in it. Concerning the Heart, God seems to say as Joseph of Benjamin, If you bring not Benjamin with you, you shall not see my Face. Among the Heathens, when the Beast was cut up for Sacrifice, the first Thing the Priest looked upon was the Heart, and if that were unsound and nought, the sacrifice was rejected. God rejects all Duties (though glorious soever in other Respects) offered him without a Heart. He that performs Duty without a Heart, heedlessly, is no more accepted with God, than he that performs it with a double Heart, viz. hypocritically. *Isa.* 66. 3. And thus I have briefly opened the Nature of the Duty, what is imported in this Phrase, Keep Heart.

2. Next, I shall give you some rational Account why Christians should make this the great Business of their Lives, to keep their Hearts.

The Importance and Necessity of making this the great and main Business, will manifestly appear in the following. 1. The Honour of God. 2. The Sincerity of Profession. 3. The Beauty of our Conversation. 4. The Comfort of our Souls. 5. The Improvement of our Graces: And, 6. Our Stability in the Hour of Temptation, are all wrapt up in, and Dependant on our Sincerity and Care in the Management of this Work.

1. The Glory of God is much concerned there. Heart-evils, are very provoking evils to the Lord. The Schools do well observe, that outward Sins are *majoris Infamiæ*, Sins of greater Infamy, but Heart-sins are *majoris Reatus*, Sins of deeper Guilt. He that severely hath the great God declared his Wrath for

Heart

heaven against Heart-wickedness? The great Crime
which the Old World stands indicted, *Gen.* 6. 5, 6.
is Heart-wickedness: God saw that every imagina-
tion (or fiction) of their Heart was only Evil, and that
continually; for which he sent the dreadfulest Judg-
ment that was ever executed since the World began:
and the Lord said, I will destroy Man whom I have
created, from the Face of the Earth, both Man and
Beast, and the creeping Things, and Fowls of Heaven,
it repenteth me that I have made Man, v. 7. We
did not their murders, adulteries, blasphemies, (though
they were defiled with these) particularly alledged
against them, but the Evils of their Hearts; yea, that
which God was so provoked by, as to give up his pe-
culiar Inheritance into the Enemies hand, was the Evil
of their Hearts, *Jer.* 4. 14. O Jerusalem, wash thine
Heart from Wickedness, that thou mayest be saved:
How long shall vain Thoughts lodge within thee! The
Wickedness and vanity of their Thoughts God took
special Notice of; and because of this the Chaldean
Bust came upon them as a Lion from his Thickets, v. 7,
and tear them to Pieces. For the very Sin of Thoughts
was that God threw down the fallen Angels from
Heaven, and keeps them still in Everlasting Chains to
the Judgment to which they are reserved, as Prisoners
that have most Irons laid upon them, may be supposed
to be the greatest Malefactors, and what was their Sin?
Only spiritual Wickedness; for they having no
sensible Organs, could act nothing externally against
God. Yea, meer Heart-evils are so provoking, that
for them he rejects with Indignation all the Duties that
Men perform unto him, *Isa.* 66.
3. He that killeth an Ox, is as if he slew a Man,
that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dog's
Neck

Neck, he that offereth an Oblation, as if he offered Swines Blood, he that burneth Incense, as if he blessed an Idol. In what Words could the Abhorrence of a Creature's Actions be more fully expressed by the Holy God? Murder and Idolatry are not more vile in our Account than their Sacrifices, though materially such as himself appointed: and what made them so? The following Words inform us, Their Soul delighted in their Abominations.

To conclude, Such is the Vileness of meer Heart-fornication that the Scripture sometimes intimates the difficulty of Pardon for them. So in Case of Simon Magus, *Acts* 8, 21. His heart was not right, he had vile Thoughts of God, and the Things of God, the Apostle bids him repent and pray, if perhaps the Thoughts of his Heart might be forgiven him. O then never slight Heart-fornication evils; for by these God is highly wronged and provoked, and for this Reason let every Christian make it his Work to keep his Heart with all Diligence.

2. The Sincerity of our Profession much depends upon the Care and Conscience we have in keeping our Hearts, for it's most certain that a Man is but an Hypocrite in his Profession, how curious soever he be in the externals of Religion, that is heedless and careless of the Frame of his Heart; you have a pregnant Instance of this in the Case of Jehu, *2 Kings* 10, 11. But Jehu took no heed to walk in the Ways of the Lord God of Israel with his Heart. That Context gives us an Account of the great Service perform'd by Azariah and Baal, as also of a great temporal Reward given him by God for that Service, even that his Children to the fourth Generation should sit upon the Throne of Israel. And yet in these Words Jehu is censured for an Hypocrite; though God approved and rewarded

work, yet he Abhorred and rejected the Person that
it as Hypocritical; and wherein lay his hypocrisy?
in this, that he took no heed to walk in the Ways
the Lord with his Heart, (i. e.) he did all insincere-
and for self-ends; and though the Work he did was
materially good, yet he, not purging his Heart from
those unworthy Self-designs in doing it, was an Hypo-
rite; And Simon of whom we spake before, though
appeared such a Person that the Apostle could not
regularly refuse him, yet his Hypocrisy was quickly
discovered: and what discovered it but this; that though
he professed and associated himself with the Saints, yet
he was a Stranger to the Mortification of Heart-sins:
his Heart is not right with God, *Acts* 8. 21.—'Tis
there is a great difference among Christians them-
selves, in their Diligence and Dexterity about Heart-
work; some are more conversant and successful in it,
than others are; but he that takes no heed to his Heart,
that is not careful to order it aright before God, is
but a Hypocrite, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. And they come
unto me as the People cometh, and sit before thee (as
my People) and they hear thy Words, but they will
not do them; for with their Mouth they shew much
love, but their Heart goes after their Covetousness.
Here were a Company of formal Hypocrites, as it is
evident by that Expression (as my People) like them,
but not of them: and what made them so? Their Out-
side was fair; here were reverent Postures, high Pro-
fessions, much seemingly Joy and Delight in Ordinances;
you art to them as a lovely Song; yea but for all that,
they kept not their Hearts with God in those Duties,
their Hearts were commanded by their Lusts, they
went after their Covetousness; had they kept their
Hearts

Hearts with God all had been well, but not regarding which way their Hearts went, in Duty, there lay a Coal of their Hypocrisy.

Object. If any upright Soul should hence infer, that I am an Hypocrite too, for many Times my Heart departs from God in Duty, do what I can, yet I cannot hold it close with God.

Sol. To this I Answer, the very Objection carries it, its own Solution: Thou sayest, Do what I can, yet I cannot keep my Heart with God. Soul, if thou do what thou canst, thou hast the blessing of an upright though God sees good to exercise thee under the Affliction of a discomposed Heart. There remains still for Wildness in the Thoughts and Fancies of the best humble them; But if you find a Care before to prevent them, and opposition against them, when they come, Grief and Sorrow afterwards, you will find enough to clear you from reigning Hypocrisy.

1. This Fore-care is seen partly in laying up thy Word in thine Heart to prevent them, *Psalms* 119, 1 Thy Word have I hid in mine Heart, that I might not sin against thee: Partly in our Endeavours to engage our Hearts to God, *Jer.* 30, 21. And partly in begging preventing Grace from God in our onsets upon Duty, *Psalms* 119, 36. 37. 'Tis a good Sign when this Care goes before a Duty.

And (2.) 'Tis a sweet Sign of Uprightness to oppose them in their first Rise, *Psalms* 117, 113. I have vanquished my Thoughts, *Gal.* 5, 17. The Spirit lusteth against the Flesh.

And (3.) Thy after Grief discovers thy upright Heart; if with Hezekiah thou art humbled for the Evil of thy Heart, thou hast no Reason from these Disorders to question the Integrity of it; but to suffer Sin to lodge quietly in the Heart, to let thy Heart habitually and un-

untrooledly wander from God, is a sad and dangerous symptom indeed.

3. The Beauty of our Conversation arises from the Heavenly Frames, and Holy Order of our Spirits; there is a spiritual Lustre and Beauty in the Conversation of Saints, The Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour, they shine as the Lights of the World, but whatever lustre and beauty is in their Lives, comes from the Excellency of their Spirits; as the Candle within casts a Lustre upon the Lanthorn in which it shines. It is impossible that a disordered and neglected Heart could ever produce a well ordered Conversation; and hence (as the Text observes) the issues or streams of Life flow out of the Heart of their Fountain, it must needs follow, that such as the Heart is the Life will be: Hence 1 *Peter* 2, 11. 12. Abstain from fleshly lusts—having your Conversation honest or *beautiful*, as the Greek Word imports. So *Isa.* 55, 7. Let the wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts. His ways notes the Course of his Life, his thoughts the frame of his Heart; and therefore since the way and course of his Life flows from his Thoughts, or the Frame of his Heart; both or either will be forsaken; the Heart is the Womb of all Actions, these Actions are virtually and seminally contained in our Thoughts, these Thoughts being once made up into Affections, are quickly made out into suitable Actions and practices. If the Heart be wicked, then as Christ saith, *Matth.* 15, 19. Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, &c. Mark the order, first wanton or revengeful Thoughts, then unclean or murderous Practices.

And if the heart be holy and spiritual, then, as David speaks from sweet Experience, in *Psal.* xlv. 1. My Heart is [inditing] a good Matter. I speak of

the things which [I have made] my Tongue the Pen of a ready Writer. Here is a Life richly beautified with good Works; some ready made; will speak of the Things which I have made: Other upon the Wheel making, my Heart is indicting, both proceeding from the heavenly Frame of Heart.

Put but the Heart in Frame, and the Life will quickly discover that it is so. I think it is not very difficult to discern, by the Duties and Converses of Christians, what Frames their Spirits are under; take a Christian in a good Frame, and how serious, heavenly, and profitable will his Converses and Duties be! What a lovely Companion is he, during the Continuance of it! It would do any one's Heart good to be with him at such a Time, *Psal.* xxxvii. 30, 31. The mouth of the righteous speaketh Wisdom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgment, the Law of God is in his Heart.

When the Heart is up with God, and full of God, how dexterously and ingeniously will he wind in spiritual Discourse, improving every Occasion and Advantage to some heavenly Purpose? few Words run then at the waste Spout.

And what else can be the Reason, why the Discourses and Duties of many Christians are become so frosty and unprofitable, their Communion both with God and one another, becomes as a dry Stalk, but because their Hearts are neglected. Surely this must be the Reason of it, and verily it is an Evil greatly to be bewailed; for as by this Christian Fellowship it became a sapless Thing, so the attracting Beauty that was wont to shine upon the Conversation of the Saints upon the Face and Consciences of the World, (which

it did not allure and bring them in love with the ways of God; yet at least left a Testimony in their consciences of the Excellency of those Men, and their (say) this is in a great Measure lost, to the unspeakable Detriment of Religion.

Time was when Christians did carry it at such a rate, that the World stood at a Gaze at them, as that word, *zenizontai*, 1 Pet. iv. 4. imports, their Life and Language was of a different Strain from others, their Tongue discovered them to be Gallileans, where-ever they came, but now since vain Speculations, and fruitless Controversies have so much obtained, and Heart-work practical Godliness so much neglected among Professors, the Case is sadly altered, their Discourse is become like other Mens: If they come among you now, they may, (to allude to that *Acts ii.*) Hear every Man speak in his own Language. And truly I have little hopes to see this Evil redressed, and the Credit of Religion again repaired, till Christians fall to their old Work, till they ply Heart-work closer. When the Salt of Heavenly-mindedness is again cast into the Spring, the Streams will run clearer and sweeter.

4. The Comfort of the Souls doth much depend upon the keeping of our Hearts, for he that is negligent in attending his own Heart, is (ordinarily) a great stranger to Assurance, and the sweet Comforts flowing from it.

Indeed, if the Antinomian doctrine were true, which teaches you to reject all Marks and Signs for the Trials of your Conditions, telling you it is only the spirit that immediately assures you by witnessing your adoption directly without them, then you might be careless of your Hearts, yea Strangers to them, and

yet no Strangers to Comfort. But since both Scripture and Experience do confute this Dotage, I hope you will never look for Comfort in that unscriptural Way. I deny not but it is the Work and Office of the Spirit to assure you, and yet do confidently affirm, that ever you attain Assurance in the ordinary Way, where in God dispenses it, you may take Pains with your own Hearts, you may expect your Comforts upon easier Terms; but I am mistaken if ever you enjoy them upon any other. Give all diligence, prove yourselves: This is the Scripture Way. I remember Mr. Roberts, in his Treatise of the Covenant, tells us, That he knew a Christian, who in the Infancy of his Christianity, so vehemently panted after the invaluable Assurance of God's love, that for a long Time together he earnestly desired some Voice from Heaven yea, sometimes walking in the solitary Fields, earnestly desired some miraculous Voice from the Trees and Stones there; this, after many Desires and Longings was denied him: But in Time a better was afforded in the ordinary Way of searching the Word and his own Heart. An Instance of the like Nature the learned Gerson gives us, of one that was driven by Temptation upon the very Borders of Desperation, at last being sweetly settled and assured, one asked him, how he attained it? he answered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione, &c.* Not by an extraordinary Revelation but by subjecting his Understanding to the Scriptures and comparing his own Heart with them. The Spirit indeed assures by witnessing our Adoption; and he witnesseth two Ways.

(1.) Objectively, (i. e.) by working those Graces in our Souls which are the Conditions of the Promise and so the Spirit and his Graces in us are all one; the Spirit

of God dwelling in us, is a mark of our Adoption. Now the Spirit cannot be discerned in his Essence, in his Operations; and to discern these, is to discern the Spirit; and how these should be discerned without serious Searching, and diligent watching of the Heart, I cannot imagine.

2.) The other Way of the Spirit's witnessing is Effectively. i. e. by irradiating the Soul with a Grace-overflowing Light, shining upon his own Work; and in Order of Nature follows the former Work; he infuses the Grace, and then opens the Eye of the Soul to see it. Now since the Heart is the subject of that infused Grace, even this Way of the Spirit's Witnessing also includes the Necessity of keeping carefully our own Hearts: For,

1.) A neglected Heart is so confused, and dark, that the little Grace which is in it, is not ordinarily discernible: The most accurate and laborious Christians, that take most Pains, and spend most Time upon their Hearts, do yet find it very difficult to discover the pure and genuine Workings of the Spirit; how then shall the Christian, which is comparatively negligent and remiss about Heart-work, be able to discover it? Sincerity, which is the quarry, the Thing sought for, lies in the Heart like a small Piece of Gold in the Bottom of a River, he will find it must stay till the Water be clear and settled, and then he shall see it sparkling at the Bottom; and that the Heart may be clear and settled, it costs much Pains and Watching, Care and Diligence, what cost?

2.) God doth not usually indulge lazy and negligent Souls with the Comforts of Assurance, he will not

not so much as seem to patronize Sloth and Carelessness, he will give it, but it shall be in his own Way. His Command hath united our Care and Comfort together; they are mistaken that think the beautiful Child of Assurance may be born without Pangs: Alas how many solitary Hours have the People of God spent in Heart-examination? How many Times have they looked into the World, and then into their Hearts? Sometime they thought they discovered Sincerity, and were even ready to draw forth the triumphant Conclusion of Assurance, then comes a Doubt they cannot resolve, and dashes all again; many Hopes and Fears, Doubting and Reasonings, they have had at their own Breasts, before they arrived at a comfortable Settlement.

To conclude, Suppose it possible for a careless Christian to attain Assurance, yet it is impossible he should long retain it; for it is with those whose Hearts are filled with the Joys of Assurance, as with a pregnant Woman subject to Miscarriages; if extraordinary Care be not used, it is a thousand to one if ever she embrace a living Child: So it is here, a little Pride, Vanity, Carelessness, dashes all that for which thou hast been labouring a long Time in many a weary Duty. Still then the Joy of our Life, the Comfort of our Souls rises and falls with our Diligence in this Work; keep your Hearts with all Diligence.

5. The Improvement of our Graces depends on the keeping of our Hearts; I never knew Graces thrive in a negligent and careless Soul; the Heart and Roots of Grace are planted in the Heart; when the Dependency are radicated there, the more thriving and flourishing Grace is: In *Eph. iii. 17.* we are told of being made rooted in Grace: Grace in the Heart

the Root of every gracious Word in the Mouth, and every holy Work in the Hand, *Psal. cxvi. 10. 2 Cor.*

13. 'Tis true, Christ is the Root of a Christian; Christ is *Origo originana*, the originating Root, and Grace, *origo originato*, the Root originated, planted and influenced by Christ; according as this thrives under divine Influences, so the Acts of Grace are more or less fruitful or vigorous: Now in a Heart not kept with Care and Diligence, these fructifying Influences are stopt and cut off, Multitudes of Vanities break in upon it, and devour its Strength; the Heart is as it were the Pasture, in which Multitudes of Thoughts feed every Day; a gracious Heart diligently kept, feeds many precious Thoughts of God in a Day, *Psalm. cxxxix. 17.* How precious are thy Thoughts to me, O God! How great is the Sum of them? If I could count them, they are more in Number than the Sand; and when I awake, I am still with thee. And as the gracious Heart feeds and nourishes them, they refresh and feast the Heart, *Psal. lxiii 5, 6.* My Soul is filled, as with Marrow and Fatness, when I think upon thee, &c. But in the disregarded Heart, Arms of vain and foolish Thoughts are perpetually striking, and jostle out those spiritual Ideas and Thoughts of God, by which the Soul should be refreshed.

Besides the careless Heart makes nothing out of any Duty or Ordinance it performs or attends on, and yet these are the Conduits of Heaven, from whence Grace is watered and made fruitful; a Man may go with a careless Spirit from Ordinance to Ordinance, abide his Days under the choicest Teaching, and yet never be improved by them; for Heart-neglect is a Sink in the Bottom; no heavenly Influences, how

rich soever, abide in that Soul, *Matt. xiii. 3, 4.* The Heart that lies open and common like the Highway free for all Passengers, when the Seed fell on it, the Fowls came and devoured it. Alas! it is not enough to hear, unless we take heed how we hear: A Man may pray, and never the better, unless we watch our Prayer. In a Word, all Ordinances, Means, and Duties, are blessed unto the Improvement of Grace according to the Care and Strictness we use in keeping our Hearts in them.

6. Lastly, the Stability of our Souls in the Hour of Temptation, will be much according to the Care and Conscience we have of keeping our Hearts; the careless Heart is an easy Prey to Satan in the Hour of Temptation, his main Batteries are raised against the Fort-Royal, the Heart; if he wins that, he wins all; for it commands the whole Man; and (alas!) how easy a Conquest is a neglected Heart; tis no more Difficulty to surprize it, than for an Enemy to enter that City whose Gates are open and unguarded; the watchful Heart that discovers and suppresses Temptation before it comes to its Strength. Divine observe this to be the Method in which Temptations are ripened and brought to their full Strength.

There is (1.) the irritation of the Object, or the Power it hath to work upon, and provoke our corrupt Nature, which is either done by the real Presence of the Object, or else by Speculation, when the Object (though Absent) is held out by the Phantasy before the Soul.

(2.) Then follows the Motion of the sensitive Appetite, which is stirred and provoked by the Phantasy representing it as a sensual Good, as having Profit and Pleasure in it.

(3.) The

(3.) Then there is a Consultation in the Mind about deliberating about the likeliest Means of accomplishing it.

(4.) Next follows the Election, or Choice of the Will.

(5.) And lastly, the Desire, or full Engagement of the Will to it; all this may be done in a few Moments, for the Debates of the Soul are quick, and soon ended: When it comes thus far, then the Heart is won, Satan hath entered victoriously, and displayed his Colours upon the Walls of that royal Fort; but had the Heart been well guarded at first, it had never come to this Height; the Temptation had been stopt at the first or second Act; and indeed there it's stopt usually, for it is in the Motion of a tempted Soul to sin, as in the Motion of a Stone falling from the Brow of a Hill; its easily stopt at first, but when once its feet are going, *Vires acquirit eundo*: And therefore its the greatest Wisdom in the World to observe the first Motions of the Heart, to check and stop Sin there: The Motions of Sin are weakest at first; a little Care and Watchfulness may prevent much Mischiefs now, which the careless Heart not heeding, is brought within the power of Temptation; as the Syrians were brought hand-fold into the midst of Samaria, before they knew where they were.

By this Time, Reader, I hope thou art fully satisfied how consequential and necessary a Work the keeping of thy Heart is, it being a Duty that wraps up so many dear Interests of the Soul in it.

3. Next, according to the Method propounded, proceed to point out those special Seasons in the life of a Christian, which require and call for our utmost Diligence in keeping the Heart: For though (as

was observed before) the Duty binds, ad semper and there may be no Time or Condition of Life in which we may be excused from this Work; yet there are some signal Seasons, critical Hours, requiring more than a common Vigilance over the Heart.

And the first,

1 Season. "In the time of Prosperity, when Providence smiles upon us and dandles us upon her knee
 "Now Christian, keep thy heart with all diligence
 "for now 'twill be exceeding apt to grow secure, proud
 "and earthly, *Rara virtus est humilitas honorata* (said Bernard) to see a man humble under Prosperity, is
 "one of the greatest Rarities in the World, even
 "good Hezekiah could not hide a vain-glorious Temper under his Temptations, and hence that caution to
 "Israel, Deut. 6. 10. 11. 12. And it shall be when
 "the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the Land
 "which he swore to thy Fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and
 "Jacob, to give thee the great and goodly Cities which thou
 "buildest not, and houses full of things which thou filledest not, &c. then beware lest thou forget the Lord
 "and indeed so it fell out, for Jerusaleam waxed fat and
 "kicked, Deut. 32 15.

Now then the first Case will be this, viz.

1. Case. How a Christian may keep his Heart from Pride and carnal Security, under the Smiles of Providence, and confluence of Creature comforts?

There are seven choice helps to secure the Heart from the dangerous Snares of Prosperity; the first is this,

1. To

i. To consider the dangerous insnaring Temptations attending a pleasant and prosperous Condition; yea very few of those that live in the Pleasures and Prosperity of this World, escape everlasting Perdition, *Matt. xix. 24.* 'Tis easier (says Christ) for a camel to pass through the Eye of a Needle, than for such Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Cor. i. 26.* Not many mighty, not many noble are saved. It might justly make us tremble, when the Scripture tells us in general, that few shall be saved; much more when it tells us, that of that Rank and Order of which we are, but few shall be saved. When Joshua called all the Tribes of Israel, to Lot upon the plain for the Discovery of Acham, doubtless Acham was saved, when the Tribe of Judah was taken his Fear increased; but when the Family of the Zarahites was chosen, it was Time then to tremble. So when the Scripture turn comes so near as to tell us very few shall escape, 'tis Time to look about; *Miner si potest dari aliquis Rectorum*, says Chrysostom. I should wonder if any of the Rulers be saved. O how many have been coached to Hell in the Chariots of earthly pleasures, whilst others have been whipt to Heaven by the Rod of Affliction? How few, like the Daughter of Tyre, come to Christ with a Gift! How few among the rich intreat his Favour!

It may yet keep us more humble and watchful in Prosperity, if we consider that among Christians many have been much the worse for it: How good had it been for some of them, if they had never known Prosperity; When they were in a low Condition, how humble, spiritual, and heavenly were they; but when advanced, what an apparent Alteration hath come upon their Spirits; 'twas so with Israel, when they

they were in a low Condition in the Wilderneys, the Israel was Holiness to the Lord, *Jer. ii. 23.* But when they came into Canaan, and were fed in a fat Pasture then, We are the Lord's, we will come no more unto thee, *ver. 31.* Outward Gains are ordinarily attended with inward Losses, as in a low Condition their Employments were wont to have a Tang and Satisfaction of their Duties, so in an exalted Condition, their Duties commonly have a Tang of the World. He that is rich in Grace, whose Graces are not hindered by his Riches; there are but few Jehosaphat's in the World, of whom it is said, *2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6.* he had Silver and Gold in abundance, and his Heart was lifted up in the Way of God's Commands: Will this keep thy Heart humble in Prosperity, to the how dear many godly Men have paid for their Riches, that through them they have lost that which all the World cannot purchase: Then in the next Place,

3. Keep down thy vain Heart by the Consideration, that God values no Man a Jot the more for his Things. God values no Man by outward Excellencies, but by inward Graces; they are the inward Ornaments of the Spirit, which are of great Price in God's Eyes, *1 Pet. iii. 4.* he despises all worldly Glory, and excepts no Man's Person, but in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him, *Acts x. 35.* Indeed, if the Judgment of God went by the same Rule that Man doth, we might value ourselves by these Things, and stand upon them. But as one said (when dying) shall not appear before God as a Doctor, but as a Man; *tantus qui squit est, quantus est apud Deum.* So much every Man is, and no more, as he is in the Judgment of God. Doth thy Heart yet swell?

neither of the former Considerations keep it humble.

4. Then, Fourthly, Consider how bitterly many persons have bewailed their Folly when they came to see, that ever they set their Hearts upon these Things, and heartily wish that they had never known them. That a sad Story was that of Pius Quintus, who dying cried out despairingly, When I was in a low Condition, I had some Hopes of Salvation, but when I was advanced to a Cardinal, I greatly doubted it, but since I came to the Popedom, I have no Hope at all. Mr. Spencer also tells us a real but sad Story, of a rich Oppressor, who had scraped up a great Estate for his only Son; when he came to die, he called his Son to him, and said, Son, do you indeed love me? The Son answered, That nature, besides his paternal Indulgence, obliged him to that; then said the father, Express it by this, hold thy Finger in the candle as long as I am saying a Pater Noster; the son attempted, but could not endure it; upon that the father brake out into these Expressions, Thou canst not suffer the burning of thy Finger for me, but to possess this Wealth, I have hazarded my Soul for thee, and must burn Body and Soul in Hell for thy sake; my Pains would have been but for a moment, but mine will be unquenchable Fire.

5. The Heart may be kept humble, by considering what a clogging nature earthly things are to a Soul heartily ingaged in the way to Heaven; they shut out much of Heaven from us at present, though they may not shut us out of Heaven at last. If thou consider thyself under the notion of a Stranger in this World, travelling for Heaven, and seeking a better Country, thou hast then as much reason to be taken and delighted

ed with these things, as a weary Horse hath with heavy Cloak-bag. There was a serious Truth in the Atheistical Scoff of Julian, when he took away the Christian Estates, and told them, it was to make the fitter for the Kingdom of Heaven.

6. Is thy Spirit for all this flatulent and lofty, the urge upon it the consideration of that awful Day Reckoning, wherein according to our receipts of Mercies shall be our Accompts for them: And methinks this should awe and humble the vainest Heart that ever was in the Breast of a Saint. Know for certain that the Lord records all the Mercies that ever gave thee, from the beginning, to the end of thy Life. *Micah* 6. 4. Remember, O my People, from Shittim unto Gilgal, &c. Yea, they are exactly numbered and recorded in order to an account; and thy account will be suitable, *Luke* 12. 48. To whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required. You are but Stewards, and your Lord will come to take account of you; And what great account have you to make who have much of this World in your hands? What swift Witnesses will your Mercies be against you, if this be the best fruit of them?

5. It is a very humbling Consideration, That the Mercies of God should work otherwise upon my Spirit than they use to do upon the Spirit of others to whom they come as sanctified Mercies from the Love of God. Ah Lord! What a sad Consideration is this! Enough to lay me in dust; When I consider.

(1.) That their Mercies have greatly humbled them; the higher God hath raised them the lower they have laid themselves before God. Thus did Jacob when God had given him much Substance. *Gen.* 32. 5. 10. And Jacob said, I am not worthy

at least of all thy mercies, and all the truth which thou hast shewed thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now am become two hands. And thus it was with holy David, 2 Sam. 7. 18 When God had confirmed the Promise to him, to build him an House, and not reject him as he did Saul, he goes in before the Lord, and saith, Who am I? And what is my Father's House, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And so indeed God required, *Leut.* 26. 5. When Israel was to bring God the First-fruits of Canaan, they were to say, A Syrian ready to perish was my Father, &c. Do others raise God the higher for raising them? And the more God raises me, the more shall I abuse him, and exalt my self? What a sad thing is this!

(2) Others have freely ascribed the Glory of all their enjoyments to God, and magnified not themselves, but him, for their Mercies; So David, 2 Sam 7. 26. Let thy Name be magnified and the House of thy servant be established. He doth not fly upon the Mercy, and suck up the sweetness of it, looking no farther than his own Comfort; no he cares for no Mercy except God be magnified in it. So *Psalms* xviii, 2. When God had delivered him from all his Enemies. The Lord (saith he) is my strength and my Rock, he is become my Salvation. They did not put the Crown upon their own Heads as I do.

(3) The Mercies of God have been melting Mercies into others, melting their Souls in love to the God of their Mercies. So Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1. when she received the Mercy of a Son. My Soul (saith she) rejoiceth in the Lord, not in the Mercy, but in the God of the Mercy: And so Mary, Luke i. 46. My Soul doth magnify the Lord, my Spirit rejoiceth in God my

my Saviour; the Word signify, to make more room for God: Their Hearts were not contracted, but more enlarged to God.

(4) The Mercies of God have been mighty restraints to keep others from Sin. So *Ezra. ix, 1*. Seeing thou our God hast given us such a Deliverance as this, should we again break thy Commandments? Ingenuous Souls have felt the Force of the Obligation of Love and Mercy upon them.

(5) To conclude, the Mercies of God to others have been as Oil to the Wheels of their Obedience and make them fitter for Service, *2 Chron. xvii, 1*. Now, if Mercies work contrarily upon my Heart, what cause have I to be afraid that they come not to me in Love? I tell you, this is enough to damp the Spirit of any Saint, to see what sweet Effects they have had on others, and what sad Effects on him.

2. Season. ' The second special Season in the Life of a Christian, requiring more than a common Diligence to keep his Heart, in the Time of Adversity, when Providence frowns upon you, and blasts your outward Comforts, then look to your Hearts, keep them with all Diligence from repining against God, or fainting under his Hand; for troubles though sanctified are troubles still, even Sweet-briar, and holy Thistles have their Prickles. *Jonah* was a good Man, and yet how pettish was his Heart under Affliction? *Job* was the Mirrour of Patience, yet how was his Heart discomposed by Trouble. You will find it as hard to get a composed Spirit under great Afflictions, as it is to fix Quick-silver; Or the Hurries and Tumults which they Occasion, even in the best Hearts! Well then, the second Case will be this.

2. Case, how a Christian under great Afflictions, may keep his Heart from repining or desponding under the Hand of God. Now there are Nine special helps I shall here offer to keep thy Heart in this Condition; and the first shall be this, to work upon your Hearts this great Truth.

1. That by these cross Providences, God is faithfully pursuing the great Designs of Electing Love upon the Souls of his People, and orders all those Afflictions as means sanctified to that end.

Afflictions fall not out by Casualty, but by Counsel, *Job* v. 6. *Eph.* i. 11. by this Counsel of God they are ordained as Means of much spiritual good to Saints *Isa.* xlvii. 9. By this shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged, *xc.* *Heb.* xii. 10, But he for our profit &c. *Rom.* viii.

8. All Things move together for good, they are Gods Workmen upon our Hearts, to pull down the Pride and carnal Security of them; and being so, their Nature is changed; they are turned into Blessings and Benefits, *Psalms* cix, 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted. And sure then thou hast no Reason to quarrel with, but rather to admire that God should concern himself so much in thy good, to use any Mean, for the Accomplishing of it, *Philip* iii. 11. Paul could bless God, if by any Means he could obtain the Resurrection of the dead. My Brethren (saith James) count it all Joy when you fall into divers Temptations, *1 James* ii. 3. My Father is about a Design of Love upon my Soul, and do I well to be angry with him? All that he doth is in pursuance of, and Reference to some eternal glorious Ends upon my Soul. O 'tis my Ignorance of God's Design, that makes me quarrel with him? He saith to thee in this Case as to Peter, What I do thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou shalt know it.

2. Help

2. Help, Though God hath reserved to himself liberty of afflicting his People, yet he hath tied up his own hands by promise, never to take away his loving kindness from them. Can I look that Scripture in the Face with a repining discontented Spirit, 2 Sam, 7. I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son; if he commit Iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of Men; nevertheless my mercy shall not depart away from him. O my Heart, my haughty Heart, do'st thou well to be discontented, when God hath given thee the whole Tree, with all the Clusters of Comfort growing on it, because he suffers the Wind to blow down a few leaves. Christians have two Sorts of Goods, the Goods of the Throne, and the Goods of the Footstool; Moveables and Immoveables; if God have secured these, never let my Heart be troubled at the Loss of those: Indeed if he had cut off his Love, or discovenanted my Soul, I had Reason to be cast down; but this he hath not, he cannot do.

3. Help. It is of marvellous Efficacy to keep the Heart from sinking under Affliction, to call to mind, that thine own Father hath the ordering of them: Not a Creature moves Hand or Tongue against thee, but by his Permission. Suppose the Cup be a bitter Cup, yet 'tis the Cup which thy Father hath given thee to drink, and canst thou suspect Poison to be in that Cup which he delivers thee? Foolish Man; put home the Case to thine own Heart, consult with thine own Bowels; canst thou find in thy Heart to give thy Child that which would hurt and undo him? No, thou would'st as soon hurt thyself as him. If thou then, being evil, knowest how to give good Gifts to thy Children, how much more doth God, Matth. vii. 11. The very Consideration of his Nature, a God of Love, Pity

and tender Mercies, or of his Relation to thee, a Father, Husband, Friend, might be Security enough, if he had not spoken a Word to quiet thee in Case; and yet you have his Word too, Jer. xxv. 6. It will do you no Hurt. You lie too near his Heart to hurt you; nothing grieves him more than your groundless unworthy Suspicions of his Designs do; would it grieve a faithful tender-hearted Physician, when he hath studied the Case of the Patient, prepared the best excellent Receipts to save his Life, to hear him cry out, Oh he hath undone me, he hath poisoned me, because it gripes and pains him in the Operation! When will you be ingenuous!

Help. God respects you as much in a low as in a high Condition; and therefore it need not so much humble you to be made low; nay, to speak home, he manifests more of his Love, Grace, and Tenderneſs in Time of Affliction than Prosperity: As God did at first chuse you, because you were high, so he will not forsake you because you are low: Men may flatter thy upon you, and alter their Respects as your Condition is altered: When Providence hath blasted your Estates, your Summer Friends may grow strange, fearing you may be troublesome to them, but will they do so? No, no, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, Heb. 13. 5. Indeed if Adversity and Poverty should bar you from Access to God, it were a sad Conclusion; but you may go to God as freely as ever, My God (saith the Church) will hear me, Micah 7. Poor David, when stript out of all earthly Comforts, could encourage himself in the Lord his God, and why cannot you? Suppose your Husband or Child had lost all his Estate, and should come to you in Rags, could you refuse the Relation? Or refuse to entertain him? If you would

would not, much less will God: Why then are you troubled? Though your Condition be changed, your Father's Love and Respects are not changed.

5. Help. And what if by the Loss of outward Comforts, God will preserve your Souls from the ruling Power of Temptation; sure then, you have little Cause to sink your Hearts, by such sad Thoughts about them. Are not these earthly Enjoyments, the things that make Men shrink and warp in times of trial for the love of these, many have forsaken Christ? In such an Hour, Matth, 19. 22. he went away sorrowful, for he had great Possessions: And if this be God's Design, what have I done in quarrelling with him about it? We see Mariners in a Storm can throw over-board rich Bails of Silk, and precious Things, to preserve the Vessel and their Lives with it, and every one of them act prudently; we know 'tis usual for Soldiers in a City besieged, to batter down or burn the fair Buildings without the Walls, in which the Enemy might shelter in the Siege; and no Man doubts but 'tis wisely done: Such as have Gangreened Legs or Arms, willingly stretch them out to be cut off, and not only thank, but pay the Chirurgion for his Pains: And must God only be repined at, for casting overboard what would sink you in a Storm? For pulling down what would advantage your Enemy in the Siege? For Temptation? For cutting off what would endanger your Everlasting Life? O inconsiderate, ingrateful Man! Are not these Things for which thou grievest the very Things that have ruined Thousands of Souls? Well, what Christ doth in this, thou knowest not now but hereafter thou may'st.

6. Help. It would much stay the Heart under adversity, to consider, That God by such humbling Pro-
vident

ences, may be accomplishing that for which you
long prayed and waited: And should you be
troubled at that? Say Christian, hast thou not many
suyers depending before God upon such accounts as
these, that he would kill and mortify thy Lusts, that
thy Heart may never find rest in any enjoyment but
in Christ? Why now, by such humbling and impoverish-
ing Strokes, God may be fulfilling thy desire: Wouldst
thou be kept from Sin? Lo, he hath hedged up thy
way with Thorns: Wouldst thou see the Creatures
vanity? Thy afflictions is a fair Glass to discover it,
the Vanity of the Creature is never so effectually
sensibly discovered, as in our own Experience of
it. Wouldst thou have thy Corruptions mortified? This
is the way? Now God takes away the Food and Fuel
to maintain'd them; for as Prosperity begat and fed
them, so Adversity, when sanctified, is a Means to kill
them. Wouldst thou have thy heart to rest no where
but in the Bosom of God? What better way canst
thou imagine Providence should take to accomplish
thy desire, than by pulling from under thy Head that
Pillow or Creature-delights on which thou rested
before? And yet you fret at this, peevish Child, how
canst thou exercise thy Father's Patience? If he delay
to answer thy Prayers, thou art ready to say, He re-
gards thee not; if he do that which really answers the
scope and main end of them, but not in the way thou
expectedst, thou quarrellest with him for that, as if in-
stead of answering, he were crossing all thy hopes and
desires, is this ingenious? Is it not enough that God is so
merciful to do what thou desirest, but thou must be so
impudent to expect he should do it the way which thou
describest?

7. Help

7 Help. Again it may stay thy heart, if thou consider, That in these Troubles God is about that work which if thou didst see the design of, thy Soul would rejoice. We poor Creatures are bemisted with much ignorance, and are not able to discern how particular Providences work towards God's end; and therefore like Israel in the Wilderness are often murmuring because Providence leads us about in a howling Desolation where we are exposed to straits; though yet, then he leads them, and is now leading us, by the right way to a City of Habitations. If you could but see how God in his secret Counsel hath exactly laid the whole plan and design of thy Salvation, even to the smallest means and circumstances, this way, and by these means, such a one shall be saved, and by no other; such a number of afflictions I appoint for this Man, at this time, and in this order: they shall befall him thus, and thus they shall work for him; could you, I say, but discern the admirable harmony of divine dispensations, their mutual relations to each other; together with the general respect and influence they all have unto the last end of all the conditions in the World, you would choose that you are now in, had you liberty to make your own choice. Providence is like a curious piece of Arras, made up of a thousand threads; which since we know not what to make of, but put together and stitched up orderly, they represent a beautiful History to the Eye: As God works all things according to the Counsel of his own Will, so that Counsel of God hath ordained this, as the best way to bring about thy Salvation: Such a one hath a proud Heart, so many humbling Providences I appoint for him; such a one hath an earthly Heart, so many impoverish Providences

him : Did you but see this, I need say no more to support the most dejected Heart.

8. Help. Farther, it would much conduce to the element of your Hearts, to consider, That by fretting and discontent you do your selves more injury in all the afflictions you lye under, could do : Your discontent is that which arms your troubles with sting, 'tis you that makes your burthen heavy, by struggling under it : Could you but lye quiet under the hand of God, your condition would be much easier and sweeter than it is : *Impatiens ægrotus crudelem sit Medicum.* This makes God lay on more strokes, as a Father will upon a stubborn Child that receives Correction.

Besides, it unfits the Soul to pray over its troubles, to take in the sense of that good which God intends them : Affliction is a Pill, which being wrapt up in a Patience, and quiet Submission, may be easily swallowed ; but discontent chews the Pill, and so impeters the Souls : God throws away some comfort which he saw would hurt you, and you will throw away your Peace after it ; he shoots an Arrow which sticks in your Cloaths, and was never intended to hurt, but only to fright you from Sin ; and you will thrust it inward to the piercing of your very Hearts, to despondency and discontent.

9. Help. Lastly, if all this will not do, but thy heart (like Rachel) still refuses to be comforted, or contented, then consider one thing more, which, if seriously pondered, will doubtless do the work, and that is this, Compare the Condition thou art now in (and art so much dissatisfied with) with that condition others are, and thy self deservest to be in : Others are burning in Flame, howling under the scourge of Ven-

geance, and amongst them I deserve to be. O Soul! Is this Hell? Is my Condition as bad as the Damned? O what would thousands now in Hell give to change Conditions with me? It is a Great Example famous instance which Dr. Taylor gives us of the Duke of Conde; I have read (saith he) that when the Duke of Conde had entered voluntarily into the incommodities of religious Poverty, he was one day espied and pitied by a Lord of Italy, who out of tenderneſs, wiſhed him to be more careful and nutritive of his Perſon. The good Duke answered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided of Conveniencies for I ſend an Harbinger before me, who makes ready my Lodgings, and takes care that I be Royally entertained. The Lord asked him who was his Harbinger; he answered, The knowledge of my ſin and the conſideration of what I deſerve for my Sin which is Eternal Torments, and when with this Knowledge I arrive at my Lodging how unprovided ſometimes I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deſerve. Why doth the living Man complain? And thus the Heart may be kept from deſponding or repining under Adverſity.

3. Season. " The third Season calling for more than ordinary diligence to keep the Heart, is the time of Sion's trouble: When the Church, like the Ship which Chriſt and his Diſciples were, is oppreſſed and ready to periſh in the Waves of Perſecution then good Souls are ready to ſink, and the Ship wrackt too upon the Billows of their own fear. " confeſs moſt Men rather need the Spur, than the Reins in this caſe, and yet ſome fit down as overcome weighed with the ſenſe of the Churches Trouble

On the loss of the Ark cost old Eli his Life; the sad posture Jerusalem lay in, made good Nehemiah's Countenance change in the midst of all the pleasures and accommodations of the Court, Neh. 2. 2. Ah this goes close to honest Hearts.

But though God allow, yea, command to most awakened apprehensions of these Calamities, and in such a day call to mourning, weeping, and girding with sackcloth. Isa. 22. 12. And severely threatens the insensible, Amos 6. 1. Yet will it not please him to see you fit like pensive Elijah under the Juniper-tree, 1 Kings 19. 4. Ah Lord God! It is enough, take away my Life also: No, Mourners in Sion you may, and ought to be, but self-tormenters you must not be; complain to God you may, but not to complain to God (though by an unsuitable Carriage, and the Language of your actions) you must not."

3. Case. The third Case that comes next to be taken to is this, How publick and tender Hearts may be relieved and supported when they are even overwhelmed with the burdensome sense of Sion's troubles? I grant it hard for him that preferreth Sion to his chief Joy, to keep his Heart that it sink not below the due Sense of its Troubles, and yet this ought and may be done by the use of such Heart-establishing Directions as these.

1. Direct. Settle this great Truth in your Hearts, that no Trouble befalls Sion, but by the Permission of Sion's God; and he permits nothing out of which will not bring much Good at last to his People.

There is as truly a Principle of Quietness in the permitting as in the commanding Will of God. See in David, 2 Sam. 6. 11. Let him alone, it may be

God hath bidden him. And in Christ, John 9. Thou couldst have no Power against me, except it were given thee from above: It should much calm our Spirits, that it is the Will of God to suffer it; and had not suffered it, it could never have been as it is.

This very Consideration quieted Job, Eli, David and Hezekiah; that the Lord did it, was enough for them. And why should it not be so to us? If the Lord will have Sion plowed as a Field, and her good Stones lie in the Dust; if it be his Pleasure that Antichrist shall rage yet longer, and wear out the Saints the most High; if it be his Will, that a Day of Trouble and of treading down, and of Perplexity the Lord God of Hosts shall be upon the Valley of Vision, that the Wicked shall devour the Man that is more righteous than he: What are we that we should contest with God? Fit it is that we should be resigned up to that Will whence we proceeded; and he that made us should dispose of us as he pleaseth: He may do what seemeth him good without our consent: Do not poor Man stand upon equal Ground that he should capitulate with his Creator, or doth God render him Account of any of his Matters? It's every Way reasonable we be content, however God dispose of us as that we be obedient to whatever he commands us.

But then, if we pursue this Argument further, considering that God's Permissions do all meet at last in the real Good of his People, this will much more quiet our Spirits. Do the Enemies carry away our good Figs, even the best among the People into Captivity? This looks like a sad Providence: But yet God sends them thither for their good, Jer. 24. 5. Doth God take the Assyrian as a Staff in his Hand to smite his People with? Those Blows are smart, and make the

; but the end of his so doing is, That he may accomplish his whole Work upon Mount Sion, Isa. 10. 1. God can bring much good out of the worst and vilest Evil of Sin, much more out of temporal Afflictions, and it is as evident that he will, as that he can do so. For it is inconsistent with the Wisdom of the common Agent, to permit any Thing (which he might prevent if he pleased) to cross his great Design and End; and can it be imagined that the most wise God should do so?

Well then, as Luther told Melancthon, *Definat Philosophus esse rector mundi*; So say I to you, let infinite Wisdom, Power and Love alone, for by these all Creatures are swayed and Actions guided, in reference to the Church. It's none of our Work to rule the world, but to submit to him that doth, *Non cæco involvuntur rotæ*, the motions of Providence are all wise, the Wheels are full of Eyes; It is enough that the Affairs of Sion are in a good Hand.

Direct. Ponder this Heart-supporting Truth, in reference to Sion's Trouble. That how many Troubles are upon her, yet her King is in her.

What? Hath the Lord forsaken his Churches? Hath he sold them into the Enemies Hand? Doth he not redress what Evil befalls them? That our Hearts sink at the Rate? Is it not too shameful an undervaluing of the great God? And too much magnifying of poor potent Men to fear and tremble at Creatures, whilst he is in the midst of us? The Churches Enemies many and mighty, let that be granted: yet that Argument with which Caleb and Joshua strove to raise their own Hearts, is of as much Force now as it was then: The Lord is with us, fear them not, Num. 14. 9. The Historian tells us, that when Antigonus over-heard

his Soldiers reckoning how many their Enemies were and so discouraging one another; he suddenly stepped among them with this Question, And how many (he) do you reckon me for? Discouraged Souls, How many do you reckon the Lord for? Is he not our match for all his Enemies? Is not one Almighty more than many Mighties? Doth his presence stand for nothing with us? If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. 8. 31. What think you was the Reason that great Exploration Gideon made in Judges 6. his questions, ver. 12, 13. he desires a Sign, ver. 17. after that another, ver. 36. and what was the end of all this? But that he might but write this Motto upon his Ensign, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon. So then, if you can be well assured, the Lord is for his People, you will get thereby above all your discouragements: And that he is so, you need not (of him) desire a Sign from Heaven, Lo, you have a Sign before you, even their marvellous Preservation amidst all their Enemies. If God be not with his People, how is it they are not swallowed up quite? Do their Enemies want Malice Power or Opportunity? No, but there is an invisible Hand upon them. And then, as it is, *Exod. xxxiii, 14.* Let his Presence give us rest; and though the Mountains be hurled to the Sea, tho' Heaven and Earth mingle together, yet not, God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.

3. Direct. Ponder the great Advantage attending the People of God in an afflicted Condition. If a Church and an afflicted State in the World be really benefited by the Church, then your Dejections are not only rational but ingrateful; indeed, if you estimate the Happiness of the Church, by its worldly splendour and prosperity, then such Times will

ed for it ; but if you reckon its Glory to consist in Humility, faith, patience, and Heavenly-mindedness, no Condition in the World abounds with Advantages for these as an afflicted Condition doth. It was not persecutions and prisons, but Worldliness and Antioneness, that was the poison of the Church ; neither was it the earthly Glory of its Professors, but the Good of its Martyrs, that was the Seed of the Church. The Power of Godliness did never thrive better than in Affliction, and never ran lower than in Times of greatest Prosperity ; when we are left a poor and afflicted People, then we learn to trust in the Name of the Lord, *Zeph. iii. 12.* What say you, O Sirs ? is it indeed for the Saints Advantage to be Debarred from the loves and delights of ensnaring world-Vanities ? To be quickned and Prickt forward with more haste to Heaven, to have clearer discoveries of their own Hearts, to be taught to Pray more fervently frequently, spiritually, to look and long for the rest to come, more ardently ? If this be for their Advantage, Experience teacheth us, that no Condition is ordinarily blest with such Fruits as these, like an afflicted Condition.

And is it well done then to repine and droop because your Father consults more the Advantage of your Souls, than the pleasing of your Humours ? Because he will bring you a nearer way to Heaven than you are willing to go ? Is this a due requital of his Love, who is pleased so much to concern himself in your Welfare ? Which is more than he will do for Thousands in the World, upon whom he will not lay a Rod, or send an Affliction for their good, *Hos. iv, 17. Mat. v. 14.* But alas we judge by Sense, and reckon Things Good for evil, according to what we for the Present can taste and feel in them.

4. Direct. Take heed that you overlook not many precious Mercies which the People of God enjoy amidst all their Troubles.

'Tis pity that you Tears upon the Account of Troubles, should so blear and blind our Eyes, that should not see our Mercies and Grounds of Comfort. I will not insist upon the Mercy of having your life given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward Comforts, temporal Conveniences, and Accommodations, which you enjoy even above what Christ and his precious Servants, of whom the World was not worthy, ever had.

But what say you to pardon of Sin? Interest in Christ? The Covenant of Promises? And an eternity of Happiness in the presence of God after a few Days are over? O that ever a People intituled to so many Mercies as these, should droop under any temporal Affliction, or be so much concerned for the Frowns of Men, and loss of Trifles! You have not the smiles of great Men, but you have the Favour of the great God. You are, it may be cast back in your Estates, but still you may live as holy and heavenly as ever. Why do you then grieve so much for these Circumstantialities as to forget your Substantials? Shall light Troubles make you forget weighty mercies? Remember that Churches true Riches are laid out of the reach of their Enemies: They may make you poor, but not miserable. What though God do not distinguish in his outward Dispensations betwixt his own and others? Yea, what though his Judgment single out the best, and spare the worst? What though an Abel be killed in Love, and a Cain survive in Hatred; a bloody Dionysius die in his Bed, and a good Josiah fall in Battle? What though the Belly of the wicked be filled with hid Treasures

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the Teeth of the Saints broken with Gravel-stones,
still here is much matter of Praise; For electing
ve hath distinguished, though common Providence
not; and whilst prosperity and impunity slay the
cked, even slaying and adversity shall benefit and
ve the Righteous.

5. Direct. Believe, that how low soever the Church
plunged under the Waters of adversity, it shall
uredly rise again. For note, for as sure as Christ
of the third Day, notwithstanding the Seal and
atch that was upon him, so sure the Church shall
e out of all her Troubles, and lift up her victorious
ead over all its Enemies. There's no fear of ruin-
g that People that thrive by their Losses, and mul-
ly by being diminished. O be not too quick to bury
e Church before she be dead! Stay till Christ hath
ed his Skill before you give it up for lost; the Bush
ay be all in a Flame, but shall never be consumed,
d that because of the good Will of him that dwelleth
the Bush.

6. Direct. Record the famous Instance of God's
re and tenderness over his People in former Straits.
Christ hath not suffered it to be devoured yet; for above
ese Sixteen Hundred Years the Christian Church
th lived in Affliction, and yet it is not consumed:
any a Wave of Persecution hath gone over it, and
it is not drowned; many designs to ruin it, and
herto none hath prospered: This is not the first
me that Hamans and Achitophels have plotted its
in, that an Herod has stretched out his Hand to vex
Still it hath been preserved from, supported under,
delivered out of all its Troubles: And is it not as
ear to God as ever? Is he not as able to save it now
formerly? though we know not whence deliverance
should

should arise, Yet the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of Temptations, 2 Pet. ii. 9.

7. Direct. If you can fetch no Comfort from any of the former Arguments, then in the last place, whether you cannot draw some Comfort out of your very Trouble. Surely this Trouble of your's is a good Argument of your Integrity, union is the ground of sympathy, if you had not some rich Adventure on that Ship, would you tremble as you do when it is in danger: Besides, this frame of Spirit may afford you this Argument, that if you be so sensible of the Churches Troubles, Jesus Christ is much more sensible of, and sollicitous about it than you can be, and will cast an Eye of favour upon them that mourn for it, Isa. lvii. 18.

4. Season. "The fourth special Season of expressing our utmost Diligence in keeping our Hearts in the time of Danger and publick Distraction: such times the best Hearts are but too apt to be surprized by slavish fear: It is not easy to secure the Heart against Distraction in times of common Destruction: If Syria be confederate with Ephraim, how do the Hearts of the House of David shake even as the Trees of the Wood which were shaken with the Wind, Isa. vii. 2. When there are ominous Signs in the Heavens, on the Earth Distressing Nations, with perplexity, the Sea and Waves roaring, then the Hearts of Men fail for fear and looking after those things which are coming on the Earth, Luke xxi. 25, 26. even as Paul himself sometimes complain of fightings within, when there are fears without, 2 Cor. vii. 5.

But my Brethren, these Things ought not to be the Saints should be of a more raised Spirit: So

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David when his Heart was kept in a good frame,
Psal. xxvii. 1. The Lord is my light and my salvation,
whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my
life, of whom shall I be afraid? Let none but the Ser-
vants of Sin be the Slaves of Fear, let them that have
delighted in Evil, fear Evil, *impius tantum meruit,
tantum nocuit.* O let not that which God hath
threatened as a Judgment upon the Wicked, ever seize
upon the Breasts of the Righteous; I will send (saith
God) faintness into their Hearts in the land of their
enemies, and the sound of a shaking Leaf shall chase
them, Lev. xxvi. 36. O what poor spirited Men
were these to fly at a shaking Leaf! which makes a
pleasant and not a terrible noise, and is in itself a kind
of natural Musick; but to a guilty Conscience, the
whistling Leaves are Drums and Trumpets. But God
hath not given us the spirit of Fear but of Love, and
of a sound Mind, 2 Tim. i. 7. A sound Mind, as it
stands there in opposition to the Spirit of Fear, is an
unwounded Consciences not infirm'd by guilt: And
this should make a Man as bold as a Lion, I know
it cannot be said of a Saint, what God spake of Le-
viathan, that he is made without Fear. There is a
natural Fear in every Man, and it's as impossible to be
wholly put off, as the Body itself is; 'Tis a perturba-
tion of the mind rising from the apprehension of ap-
proaching Danger; and as long as Dangers can ap-
proach us, we shall find some perturbations within us.
'Tis not my purpose to commend to you a Stoical
Apathy, nor yet to take you off from such a Degree
of cautional preventive Fear as may fit you for Troubles,
and be serviceable to your Souls. There is a provi-
dent Fear that opens your Eyes to foresee Danger,
and quickens to a prudent and lawful use of means
to

to prevent it: Such was Jacob's Fear, Gen. xxxiii. 9, 10, &c. But it is the Fear of Diffidence. I persuade you to keep your Hearts from that Tyrannical Passion which invades the Heart in times of Danger and distracts, weakens, and unfits the Heart for Duty. It drives Men upon unlawful means, and brings a snare with it. Well then, the fourth Case will be this.

4. Case. How a Christian may keep his Heart from distracting and tormenting Fears in times of great and threatening Dangers.

Now there are Fourteen excellent Rules or Heads for the keeping of the Heart from sinful Fear when eminent Dangers threaten us; and the first is this.

1. Rule. Look upon all the Creatures as in the Hand of God, who manages them in all their Motion, limiting, restraining, and determining them all at his Pleasure.

Get this great Truth well settled by Faith in your Hearts, it will marvellously guard them against slavish Fears; the first of Ezekiel contains an admirable Scheme or Draught of Providence; there you may see the living Creatures who move the Wheels, viz. the great Affairs and Turnings of Things here below coming unto Christ, who sits upon the Throne to receive new Orders and Instructions from him, ver. 22, 25, 26. and in Rev. 6. you read of white, black, and red Horses, which are nothing else but the Instruments which God employs in executing his Judgments in the World, as Wars, Pestilence, and Death, but when those Horses are prancing and trampling up and down the World, here is that may quiet our Hearts, that God hath the Reins in his Hand. Wicked Men are sometimes like mad Horses, they would stamp the People of God under their Feet, but that the Bridle of Providence

Provi

providence is in their Lips, John xix. 11, 12. A man at liberty is terrible to meet: But who is afraid of the Lion in the Keeper's Hand?

2. Rule. Remember that this God in whose Hand the Creatures are, is your Father, and is much more tender over you, than you are or can be over yourselves? He that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of mine Eye, Zech. ii. 8. Let me ask the most timorous Woman, whether there be not a vast difference between the sight of a drawn Sword in the Hand of a bloody Ruffin, and the same Sword in the Hand of their own tender Husband? As great a difference there is in looking upon Creatures by an Eye of Sense, and looking on them as in the Hand of your God by an Eye of Faith; that is a sweet Scripture to this purpose, Isaiah liv. 5. Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name; he is Lord of all the hosts of Creatures in the World: Who would be afraid to pass through an Army, though all the Soldiers should turn their Swords and Guns towards him, if the General of that Army were his Friend or Father? I have met with an excellent Story of a religious young Man, who being at Sea with many other Passengers in a great Storm, and they being half dead with Fear, he only was observed to be very chearful, if he had been but little concerned in that Danger; some of them demanding a reason of his chearfulness; he said he, 'Tis because the Pilot of the Ship is my Father. Consider Christ, first as the King and supreme Lord over the providential Kingdom, and then as your Head, Husband, and Friend, and thou wilt quickly say, Return unto thy rest, O my Soul. This will make you cease trembling, and fall a singing in the midst of Dangers, Psal. xlvii. 7. The Lord

Lord is King of all the Earth, sing ye Praise with Understanding, or as the Hebrew Word is, every one that hath Understanding, viz. of this Heart-reviving and establishing Doctrine of the Dominion of our Father over all the Creatures.

3. Rule. Urge upon your Hearts the express prohibition of Christ in this Case; and let your Heart stand in awe of the violation of them.

He hath charged you not to fear, Luke xxi. When ye shall hear of Wars and Commotions, see that you be not terrified. And Phil. i. 28. In nothing be terrified by your Adversaries; yea, in Matth. x. 28. 31. and within the compass of six Verses, our Saviour commands us thrice not to fear Man. Does every big Word of proud Dust and Ashes make thee afraid? Doth the Voice of a Man make thee tremble? And shall not the Voice of God? If thou art of feeble a fearful and timorous Spirit, How is it that thou fearest not to disobey the flat Commands of Jesus Christ? Methinks the Command of Christ should have much power to calm, as the Voice of a poor Worm terrify thy Heart, Isa. li. 12, 13. I, even I am that comforteth you, Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a Man that shall die? and of the Son of Man that shall be made as the Grass, and forget the Lord thy Maker? We cannot fear Creatures fully, till we have forgotten God; did we remember what he is, and what he hath said, we should not be of such feeble Spirits: Bring thy Heart to this dilemma in times of Danger; if I let into my Heart the slavish fear of Man, I must let out the reverent awe and fear of God; And dare I cast off the fear of the Almighty for the frowns of a Man? Shall I lift up proud Dust above the great God? Shall I

in a certain Sin, to shun a probable Danger? Oh thy Heart by that Consideration.

Rule. Remember how much needless trouble your vain Fears have brought upon you formerly, how you have disquieted your selves to no Pur-

sa. 51, 13. And hast feared continually because of Oppression, as if he were ready to devour; and where is the Fury of the Oppressor? He seemed ready to devour, but yet you are not devoured; I have brought upon you the Thing that you feared; I have wasted your Spirits, disordered your Souls, weakened your Hands, and all this to no Purpose. You might have all this while enjoyed your Peace, possessed your Soul in Patience. And here I cannot but observe the Policy of Satan managing a Design against the Soul by these vain Fears: I call them vain in regard of the Frustration of them by Providence, but certainly they are not in vain, as to the end Satan aims at in raising them; for herein he acts the Soldiers use to do in the Siege of a Garrison, who purpose to wear out the Besieged by constant watching, and there unfit them to make Resistance when the Storm it in earnest, do every Night give them Alarms, which though they come to nothing, do notably serve this further Design of the Enemy. When will you beware of Satan's Devices?

Rule. Consider solemnly, That though the Things you fear should really fall out, yet there is more evil in your own fear than in the Thing feared.

And that not only as the least Evil or Sin, is worse than the greatest evil of Suffering; but as this sinful Fear hath really more Torment and trouble in it, than that Condition you are so much afraid of, fear both

both is multiplying and tormenting Passion; it presents Troubles much greater than they are, and tortures and wracks the Soul much more than when Sufferings itself comes; so it was with Israel at Red-Sea, they cried out, and were sore afraid 'till put Foot into the Water, and then a Passage was opened through those Waters which they thought would have drowned them. Thus it is with us, we look through the Glass of carnal Fear, upon the Water-Trouble, the swelling of Jordan cry out, Oh they are fordable! We must needs perish in them: But when we come into the midst of those Floods indeed, we find the Promise made good, God will make a Way of escape, 1 Cor. x. 10, 13. Thus it was with Bilney, when he would make a Trial by putting his Finger to the Candle, and not able to endure that he cried out, What? How then shall I be able to bear the Burning of my whole Body to morrow? And yet when that Morrow comes he would go chearfully into the Flames with that Scripture in his Mouth, Isa. 43. 2, 3. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have delivered thee by thy Name, thou art mine; when thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee; when thou walkest through the Fire thou shalt not be burnt.

6. Rule. Consult the many precious Promises which are written for your Support and Comfort in Dangers.

These are your Refuges to which you may fly to be safe; when the Arrows of Danger fly by Night and Destruction wasteth at Noon-day. There are particular Promises suited to particular Cases and Circumstances, and there are general Promises reaching all Cases and Conditions; such are these, Romans,

All Things shall work together for good, &c. Ecclef. viii. 12. Though a Sinner do Evil an hundred Times, and his Days be prolonged, yet it will be well with them that fear the Lord, &c. Could you but believe the Promises, your Hearts should be established, 2 Chron. xx. 29. Could you but plead with God, as Jacob did, Gen. xxxii. 12. Thou wilt I will surely do thee good, &c. they would save you in every Distress.

Object. But that Promise was made personally by Name to him, so are not these to me.

Answer. If Jacob's God be your God, you have as much an Interest in them as he had. The Church a thousand Years after the Transaction betwixt God and Jacob, applied that which God spake to him, as if it had been spoken to themselves, Hosea xii. He found him in Bethel, and there he spake to us.

Rule. Quiet your trembling Hearts by reflecting and consulting your past Experiences of the Care and Faithfulness of God in former Distresses.

These Experiences are Food for your Faith in a dangerous Condition, Psalm lxxiv. 17. By this David strengthened his Heart in Time of Danger, 1 Sam. xvii. 37. Paul his, 2 Cor. i. 10. It was sweetly answered by Ariarius, when one told him, that his Enemies way-laid him to take away his Life, Si Deus mihi cunamque, quid vivo? If God take no care of me, how could I escaped hitherto? You may plead with God your Experiences to procure new ones; for it is in consulting with God for new Deliverances, as it is in consulting for new Pardons. Now mark how Moses pleaded on that Account with God, Numb. xiv. 19.

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Pardon

Pardon I beseech thee the iniquity of this People, thou hast forgiven them from Egypt until now. doth not say as Men do, Lord, this is the first time thou hast not been troubled before to sign their Pardon: But Lord, because thou hast pardoned them often, I beseech thee pardon them once again. So new Straits, Lord thou hast often heard, helpt saved, in former fears, therefore now help again, with thee there is plenteous Redemption, and thine Arm is not shortened.

8. Rule. Be well satisfied that you are in the way of your Duty, and that will beget holy Courage in times of Danger.

Who will harm you, if you be followers of Christ, which is good? 1 Pet. iii. 13. Or, if any attempt you may boldly commit yourselves to God in what he is doing, 1 Pet. iv. 19. 'Twas this consideration that raised Luther's Spirit above all fear: In the Confidence of God (said he) I ever am, and ever shall be firm herein I assume this Title, Cedo nulli: A good Cause will bear up a Man's Spirit bravely: Hear the Shame of a Heathen to the shame of cowardly Christians.

When the Emperor Vespasian had ordered Char. of Fluidius Priscus, not to come to the Senate, Wisdom, the Senate, or if he did, to speak nothing. p. 358. but what he would have him; the Senate return'd this noble Answer, that as he was a Senator, it was fit he should be at the Senate; if being there he were required to give his Advice, he would speak freely that which his Conscience commanded him; the Emperor threatening, That he should die; he answered, Did I ever tell you that I was immortal? Do you what you will, and I will

at I ought; it is in your Power to put me to death
justly, and in me to die constantly.

Righteousness is a Breast-plate; the Cause God will
pay all your Expences, let them tremble whom Dan-
iel finds out of the way of Duty.

Rule. Get your Consciences sprinkled with the
Blood of Christ from all Guilt, and that will set your
parts above all Fear.

'Tis guilt upon the Conscience that softens and
hardizes our Spirits: The Righteous is bold as a
lion, Prov. xxviii. 1. 'Twas guilt in Cain's Con-
science that made him cry, Every one that meets me
shall slay me, Gen. iv. 14. A guilty Conscience is
more terrified with conceited Danger, than a pure
conscience is with real ones. A guilty Sinner carries
Witness against himself in his own Bosom. 'Twas
Herod cried out, John Baptist is risen from the
dead. Such a Conscience is the Devil's Anvil, on
which he fabricates all those Swords and Spears, with
which the guilty Sinner pierces and wounds himself.
It is to Danger what Fire is to Gunpowder; a Man
dare not fear to walk among many Barrels of Pow-
der, if he have no Fire about him.

Rule. Exercise holy trust, in times of great
trials.

Make it your Business to trust God with your Lives
and Comforts, and then your Hearts will be at rest
about them. So did David, Psal. lvii. 3. At what
time I am afraid I will trust in thee. q. d. Lord, if at
any time a Storm arise, I will make bold to shelter
myself under the Covert of thy Wings. Go to God
in acts of Faith and Trust, and never doubt but he
will secure you, Isa. lxii. 3. Thou wilt keep him in
perfect Peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because

he trusteth in thee; God takes it well when thou comest to him thus; Father, my Life, my Liberty, Estate, are hunted after, and I cannot secure them: let me leave them in thy Hand; the poor leave himself with thee; And doth his God fail him? Thou art the helper of the fatherless, Psal. xix. that is, thou art the helper of the destitute one, hath none to go to but God. And that is a Scripture, Psal. cxii. 7. He shall not be afraid of tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; doth not say, his Ear shall be privileged from the report of evil Tidings; he may hear as sad Tidings as other Men, but his Heart shall be privileged from the Terror of those Tidings; his Heart is fixed.

11. Rule. Consult the honour of Religion more, your personal safety less.

Is it for the honour of Religion (think you) Christians should be as timorous as Hares, to start at every sound? Will not this tempt the World to think that whatever you talk, yet your Principles are better than other Mens? O what Mischief may Discoveries of your Fears before them do? 'Twas a noble Saying of Nehemiah, Chap. vi. 11. Should a Man as I flee? And who, being as I am, would flee? Where it not better you should die, than the World should be prejudiced against Christ by your Example? For alas! how apt is the World to judge more by what they see in your Practices, than by what they understand of your Principles) to conclude from your timorousness, that how much for you commend Faith, and talk of Assurances, yet you dare trust to these Things no more than they, when comes to the trial. O let not your Fears lay such a stumbling Block before the blind World.

12. Rule. He that will secure the Heart from Fear, must first secure the eternal Interest of his Soul in the Hands of Jesus Christ.

When this is done, then you may say, Now World to thy worst. You will not be very solicitous about a Body, when you are once assured it shall be well for all Eternity with your precious Souls. Fear not them (saith Christ) that can kill the Body, and after that have no power that they can do. The assured Christian may smile with contempt upon all his Enemies, and say, Is this the worst that you can do? What say you Christians, are you assured that your Souls are safe, that within a few Moments of your Dissolution, they shall be received by Christ into Everlasting Abitations? Well, if you be sure of that, never trouble yourselves about the Instruments and Means of your Dissolution.

Object. O, but a violent Death is terrible to Nature.

Answ. But what matter is it, when thy Soul is in Heaven, whether it were let out at thy Mouth, or at thy Throat? Whether thy familiar Friends, or barbarous Enemies, stand about thy dead Body, and close the Eyes? Alas, it is not worth the making so much ado about, *Nihil corpus sentit in nervo cum anima sit in cœlo*, thy Soul shall not be sensible in Heaven how thy Body is used on Earth, no, it shall be swallowed in Life.

13. Rule. Learn to quench all slavish Creature-fears, in the reverential fear of God.

This is a cure by diversion: 'Tis a rare piece of Christian Wisdom to turn those Passions of the Soul which most predominate into Spiritual Channels, to turn natural Anger into Spiritual Zeal, natural Mirth

into an holy Dread and Awe of God. This method of Cure Christ prescribes in that forementioned Place **Matth. x.** Like to which is that in **Isa. viii. 12,** Fear not their fear; but how shall we help it? We sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him your Fear and your Dread. Natural Fear may allayed for the present by natural Reason, or the Removal of the Occasion, but then 'tis but like a Candle blown out with a puff of Breath which is easily blown in again; but if the fear of God extinguish it, then like a Candle quench'd in Water, which cannot easily be rekindled.

14. Rule. Lastly, Pour out those Fears to God in Prayer, which the Devil and your own unbelief, put in upon you in times of Danger.

Prayer is the best out-let to fear, where is a Christian that cannot see his probatum est to this Direction? I will give you the greatest Example in the World to encourage you in the use of it, even the Example of Jesus Christ, **Mark xiv. 22.** When the Hour of his Danger and Death drew nigh, he gets into the Garden, separates from the Disciples, and there wrestles mightily with God in Prayer, even unto Agony: In reference to which the Apostle saith, **Heb. v. 7.** Who in the Days of his Flesh, when he offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong Cries and Tears, to him that was able to save him from Death, and was heard in that he feared. He was heard as to Strength and Support to carry him through it, though not as to Deliverance, or Exemption from it.

Now, Oh that these Things might abide with you and be reduced to practice in these evil days, that many trembling Souls may be established by them.

5. Season. "The fifth Season to exert this Diligence in keeping the Heart, is the time of Straits and outward pinching Wants: Although at such Times we should complain to God, and not of God, (the Throne of Grace being erected for a Time of Need, Heb. iv. 16.) yet when the Waters of Relief run low, and Wants begin to pinch hard, how prone are the best Hearts to distrust the Fountain! when the Meal in the Barrel, and the Oil in the Cruise are almost spent, our Faith and Patience are almost spent too. Now 'tis difficult to keep down the proud and unbelieving Heart in an holy Quietude and sweet Submission at the Foot of God. 'Tis an easy Thing to talk of trusting God for daily Bread while we have a full Barn or Purse; but to say as the Prophet, Hab. iii. 17. Though the Fig-tree should not blossom, neither Fruit be in the Vine, &c. yet will I rejoice in the Lord. Sure this is not easy." The fifth Case therefore shall be

5. Case. How a Christian may keep his Heart from distrusting God, or repining against him when outward Wants are either felt or fear'd.

This Case deserves to be seriously pondered, and specially to be studied now, since it seems to be the design of Providence to empty the People of God of their Creature fulness, and acquaint them with those Straits which hitherto they have been altogether strangers to.

Now to secure the Heart from the fore-mentioned dangers attending this Condition, these following considerations, through the Blessing of the Spirit, may prove effectual. And the first is this,

1. Confid. That if God reduce you to straits and necessities, yet he deals no otherwise therein with you than he hath done with some of the choicest and holiest Men that ever lived.

Your Condition is not singular, though you have hitherto been Strangers to wants, other Saints have daily conversed, and been familiarly acquainted with them. Hear what blessed Paul speaks, not of himself only, but in the Names of other Saints reduced to like Exigencies, 1 Cor. iv. 11. Even to this present Hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place. To such a Man as Paul going up and down the World with a naked Back, and empty Belly, and not a House to put his Head in, one that was so far above thee in Grace and Holiness, one that did more Service to God in a Day, than perhaps thou hast done him in thy Days, and yet thou repine as if hardly dealt with. Have you forgot what Necessities and Straits, even David hath suffered? How great were his Straits and Necessities, 1 Sam. xxv, 8. Give I pray thee (saith he to Nabal) whatsoever cometh to thy Hand, to thy Servants, and to thy Son David. Renowned Marcellus was forced to dig in the Town-ditch for a Maintenance. Famous Ainsworth (as I have been credibly informed) was forced to sell the Bed he lay on to buy Bread. But what speak I of these? Behold a greater than any of them, even the Son of God, who is the Heir of all Things, and by whom the Worlds were made: Yet sometimes would have been glad of a little Thing, having nothing to eat. Mark xi. 12. And the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry; and seeing a Fig-tree afar off, having leaves

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leaves, he came if haply he might find [any Thing] ereon.

Well then, hereby God hath set no **Mark** of Hatred on you; neither can you infer the want of Love from the want of Bread. When thy repining Heart asks the Question, Was there ever any Sorrow like mine? Ask these Worthies, and they will tell thee, though they did not complain and fret as thou dost, yet they were driven to as great Straits as thou present.

2. Confid. If God leave you not in this necessitous condition without a Promise, you have no Reason to repine or despond under it.

That is a sad Condition indeed, to which no Promise belongs. I remember Mr. Calvin upon those Words, ix. 1. Nevertheless the Dimness shall not be such as was in her Vexation, &c. solves the Doubt, in what sense the Darkness of the Captivity was not so great, as the lesser Incurfions made by Tiglath-Pileser. In the Captivity the City was destroyed, and the Temple burnt with Fire, there was no Comparison in the Affliction; but yet the Darknes should not be such, and the Reason (saith he) is this: Huic certam promissio- nem esse additam, cum in prioribus nulla esset: (i. e.) there was a certain Promise made to this, but none to the other.

'Tis better to be as low as Hell with a Promise, than Paradise without one. Even the Darknes of Hell itself would be comparatively no Darknes at all, were there but a Promise to enlighten it. Now God hath set many sweet Promises for the Faith of his poor people, to feed on in this Condition, such are these, Gal. xxxiv. 9, 10. O fear the Lord ye his *Saints*, for there is no Want to them that fear him; the Lions do

do lack and suffer Hunger; but they that fear the Lord shall want nothing that is good. Psal. xxxviii. 18, 19. The Eye of the Lord is upon the Righteous to keep them alive in Famine. Psal. lxxxiv. 11. no good Thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Rom. viii. 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him, also freely give us all Things. Isa. xlii. When the Poor and the Needy seek Water, and there is none, and their Tongue faileth for Thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. Here you see, first, their extream Wants, Water being put even for the Necessities of Life, (2.) their certain Relief, I the Lord will hear them; in which it is proposed, that they cry unto him in their Straits, and he hears their Cry.

Having therefore these Promises, why should your distrustful Hearts conclude like David's, Psal. xxiii. 1. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

Obj. But these Promises imply Conditions, if they were Absolute, they would afford more satisfaction.

Sol. What are those tacite Conditions you speak of but these: (1) That either he will supply or sanctify your Wants: (2) That you shall have so much as God sees fit for you. And doth this trouble you? Would you have the Mercy whether sanctified or no? No man thinks the Appetites of Saints after earthly Things should not be so ravenous, to seize greedily upon any Enjoyment, caring how they have it.

But oh, when Want pinch, and we see not where Supplies should come, then our Faith in the Promise shakes, and we, like murmuring Israel cry, He gave us Bread, can he give Water also? O unbelieving Heart! When did his Promise fail? Who ever trusted the

was ashamed? May not God upbraid thee with
the unreasonable Infidelity, as Jer. ii. 31. Have I
been a Wilderneck unto you, &c. Or as Christ said to
the Disciples, Since I was with you, lacked ye any
thing? Yea, may you not upbraid yourselves, may
you not say with good old Policarp, thus many
years, I have served Christ, and found him a good
master; indeed he may deny your Wantonness, but
what your real Wants call for; he will not re-
duce the Cry of your Lusts, nor yet despise the Cry
of your Faith; though he will not indulge and hu-
mour your wanton Appetites, yet he will not violate
his own faithful Promises. These Promises are your
security for Eternal Life; and 'tis strange if they
could not satisfy you for daily Bread. Remember ye
the Words of the Lord, and solace your Hearts with
them amidst all your Wants. 'Tis said of Epicurus,
that in the dreadful Fits of the Cholick, he often re-
buked himself, *Oh memoriam inventorum* by calling
to mind his Inventions in Philosophy: And of Possido-
nus the Philosopher, that in a great Fit of the Stone,
he solaced himself with Discourses of Moral Virtue;
when the Pain twinged him, he would say, *Nihil
est dolor quamvis sit molestus nunquam confitebor, te
malum: O Pain, thou dost nothing, though thou
a little troublesome, I will never confess thee to be*
1. If upon such Grounds as these they could sup-
port themselves under such grinding and racking Pains,
they even delude their Diseases by them: how much
more should the precious Promises of God, and the
sweet Experiences which have gone along step by step
with them, make you to forget all your Wants, and
comfort you over every Strait.
3. Confid. If it be bad now it might have been
worse;

worse; hath God denied thee the Comforts of Life? He might have denied thee Christ, Peace and Pardon also, and then thy Case had been woful indeed. You know God hath done so to Millions in the World. How many such wretched Objects may our Eyes behold every Day, that have no Comfort in Hand, yet in Hope; are miserable here, and will be so in Eternity; that have a bitter Cup, and nothing to sweeten it, no not so much as any Hope that it will be better. But it is not so with you, though you be poor in the World, yet rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom which God hath promised, Jam. ii. 5. O learn to prize your spiritual Riches over-against temporal Poverty. Balance all your present Troubles with your spiritual Privileges. Indeed, if God had denied your Souls the Robes of Righteousness to cloath them, the hidden Manna to feed them, the Heavenly Mansions to receive them; if your Souls were left destitute, as well as your Bodies, you might well be penfive; but your Consideration hath enough to bring the considerate Soul to rest under any outward Strait. 'Twas bravely said by Luther, when Want began to pinch him, Let me be contented with our hard fare (said he) for do we not feast with Angels upon Christ the Bread of Life? Blessed be God (saith Paul) who hath abounded to us in all spiritual Blessings, Ephes. i. 3.

4. Confid. This Affliction though great is not for you an Affliction, but God hath far greater, with which he chastises the dearly beloved of his Soul in this World, and should he remove this, and inflict those, you would account your present State a very comfortable State. Bless God to be as now you are.

What think ye, Sirs? Should God remove your present Troubles, supply all your outward Wants, give

the Desire of your Hearts in Creature Comforts, hide his Face from you, shoot his Arrows into your sides, and cause the Venom of them to drink up your Spirits? Should he leave you but a few Days to the tormenting of Satan and his blasphemous Injections? Should he hold your Eyes but a few Nights waking with Horrors of Conscience, tossing to and fro till the dawning of the Day? Should he lead you through Chambers of Death? Shew you the Visions of Darkness? And make his Terrors set themselves in array against you? Then tell me if you would not count it a choice Mercy to be back again in your former necessitous Condition, with Peace of Conscience! I count Bread and Water, with God's Favour, a happy State? O then; take heed of repining. - Say God deals hardly with you, lest you provoke him to convince you, by your own Sense and Feeling, that he hath worse Rods than these for unsubmissive and forward Children.

g. Confid. If it be bad now, it will be better shortly. O keep thy Heart by that Consideration; the Meal in the Barrel is almost spent; well, be it so, why should it trouble me, if I am almost beyond the Need and Use of all these Things. The Traveller hath spent almost all his Money, but a Shilling or two left; Well (with he) though my Money be almost spent, yet my Journey is almost finished too; I am near home, and soon shall be fully supplied. If there be no Candles in the House, yet 'tis a Comfort to think, that it's almost day, and then there will be no need of Candles. I am afraid Christian, thou misreckonest thyself, when thou think'st, my Provision is almost spent, and I have a great way to travel; many Years to live, and nothing to live upon: It may be not half so many as thou supposest;

poſeſt; in this be confident, if thy Proviſion be ſpent either freſh Supplies are coming (though thou ſeeſt not from whence) or thou art nearer thy Journey's End than thou reckoneſt thyſelf to be. Diſponding So doth it become a Man or Woman travelling upon the Road to that heavenly City, and almoſt arrived there within a few Days Journey of his Father's Houſe where all his Wants ſhall be ſupplied, to reckon about a little Meat, Drink, or Cloaths, which he ſhall want by the Way? It was a noble Saying of the Forty Martyrs, famous in the Eccleſiaſtical Story when turned out naked in a Froſty Night to be ſtarr'd to Death, with theſe Words they comforted one another, The Winter indeed is ſharp and cold but Heaven is warm and comfortable; here we ſhiver for Cold, but Abraham's Boſom will make amends for all.

Obj. 1. But I may die for Want.

Sol. (1.) Who ever did ſo? Where were the Righteous forſaken? (2) If ſo, your Journey is ended, and you fully ſupply'd.

Object. 2. But I am not ſure of that, were I full of Heaven, it were another matter.

Sol. Are you not ſure of that? Then you have other Matters to trouble yourſelves about than theſe: Man thinks this ſhould be the leaſt of all your Cares: I do not find that Souls perplexed and troubled about the want of Chriſt, pardon of Sin, &c. are uſually very anxious, or ſollicitous about theſe Things. He that ſeriously puts ſuch Questions as theſe, What ſhall I be ſaved? How ſhall I know my Sin is pardon'd? Doth not uſually trouble himſelf with, What ſhall I eat? What ſhall I drink, or wherewith ſhall I be cloathed?

6. Confid. Doth it become Children of ſuch a Father

to distrust to his All-sufficiency, or repine against of his Dispensations?

Do you well to question his Care and Love upon every new Exigence? say, Have you not been amazed of this formerly? Hath not your Father's reasonable Provisions for you in former Straits put you to blush and made you resolve never to question his Love and Care any more, and yet will you renew your unworthy suspicions of him again? Disingenuous Child! Reason thus with thyself; If I perish for want of what is good and needful for me, it must either be because my Father knows not my Wants, or hath not been wroth to supply them; or else regards not what comes of me. Which of these shall I charge upon him? Not the first; for, Mark vi. 32. My Father knows what I have need of, my Condition is not hid from him: Not the second, For the Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness of it, Psal. xxiv. 1. His Name is Lord All-sufficient, Gen. xvii. 1. Not the last, for, as my Father pities his Children, so the Lord pities them and will not fear him, Psal. ciii. 73. The Lord is exceeding merciful, and of tender Mercy, James v. 11. He hears the young Ravens when they cry, Job xxxviii. 41. And will he not hear me? Consider (saith Christ) the Fowls of the Air, Matth. vi. 26. Not the Fowls at the Door, that are every Day fed by Hand, but the Fowls of the Air, that have none to provide for them. Will he not both feed and cloath his Enemies, and will he forget his Children? He heard the very Cry of Ishmael the Distress, Gen. xxi. x. O my unbelieving Heart! wilt thou yet doubt? Remember Hagar and the Child.

7. Confid. Your Poverty is not your Sin. ^{but your} affliction only: If by sinful Means you have not brought

brought it upon yourselves; and if it be but Affliction it may be born the easier for that.

'Tis hard indeed to bear an Affliction coming up us as the Fruit and Punishment of Sin, when Men are under Trouble upon that Account; they usually say, O! if it were but a single Affliction coming from the Hand of God by way of Tryal, I could bear it; but I have brought it upon myself by Sin, it comes as the Punishment of Sin, the Marks of God's Displeasure are upon it, 'tis the Guilt within that troubles and galls more than the Want without.

But it is not so here, and therefore you have Reason to be cast down under it.

Object. But though there be no Sting of Guilt yet this Condition wants not other Stings: As first the Discredit of Religion; I cannot comply with mine Engagement in the World, and thereby Religion will like to suffer.

Sol. 'Tis well you have an Heart to discharge every Duty, yet if God disable you by Providence 'tis no Discredit to your Profession, because you do not that which you cannot do, so long as it is your Desire and Endeavour to do what you can and ought to do; and in this Case God's Will is, that Lenity and Forbearance be exercised towards you, Deut. xxiv. 12, 13.

2. Object. But it grieves me to behold the necessities of others whom I was wont to relieve and refresh but now cannot.

Sol. If you cannot, it ceases to be your Duty, and God accepts the drawing out of your Soul to the Hungry in Compassion and Desire to help them, though you cannot draw a full Purse to relieve and supply them.

3. Object.

Object. But I find such a Condition full of temptations, a sore Clog in the Way to Heaven.

Sol. Every Condition in the World hath its Clogs attending Temptations; and were you in a prosperous Condition, you might there meet with more temptations and fewer Advantages, than you now are: For though I confess Poverty hath its Temptations as well as Prosperity, yet I am confident, Prosperity hath not those excellent Advantages that Poverty hath; for here you have an Opportunity to discover Sincerity of your Love to God, when you can live in him, find enough in him, and constantly follow him, even when all external Inducements and Motives are removed.

And thus I have shewed you how to keep your parts from the Temptations and Dangers attending poor and low Condition in the World, when Want comes, and the Heart begins to sink, then improve these Helps to keep it.

Season. "The Sixth Season of expressing this Diligence in keeping the Heart, is the Season of Duty; when we draw nigh to God in publick, private, or secret Duties, then 'tis Time to look to the Heart, for the Vanity of the Heart seldom discovers itself more than at such Times. How oft doth the poor Soul cry out, O Lord, how fain would I serve thee, but vain Thoughts will not let me; I come to open my Heart to thee, to delight my Soul in Communion with thee, but my Corruptions have set upon me: Lord, rase off these vain Thoughts, and suffer them not to prostitute the Soul, which is espoused to thee, before thy Face." The Case then is this.

6. Case. How the Heart may be kept from Distractions by vain Thoughts in the Time of Duty.

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There is a Two-fold Distraction or wandering of the Heart in Duty: (1.) Voluntary and habitual, Ps. lxxviii. 8. They set not their Hearts aright, and the Spirit was not stedfast with God. This is the Case of Formalists, and it proceeds from the Want of an holy Bent and Inclination of the Heart to God; their Hearts are under the Power of their Lusts, and therefore no Wonder they go after their Lusts, even when they are about holy Things, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. (2.) Involuntary and lamented Distractions, Rom. vii. 21, 23. I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. O wretched Man that I am, &c. This proceeds not from the Want of a holy Bent and Aim, but from the Weakness and Imperfection of Grace. And in this Case the Soul may make the like Complaint against its own Corruptions, that Abijah did against Jeroboam, 2 Chron. xxiii. 6, 7. Yet Jeroboam the Son of Nebat is risen up against his Lord when Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted, and could not withstand them, and there are gathered unto him vain Men, the Children of Belial. Grace hath Dominion, but Lusts are mutinous and seditious, disturbing the Infancy thereof. But it is not my Business to shew you how these Distractions come into the Heart, but rather how to get and keep them out of the Heart; in order whereto take these ten following Helps.

1. Help. Sequester yourselves from all earthly employments, and set apart some Time for solemn Preparation to meet God in Duty; you cannot come reeking hot out of the World into God's presence, but you will find a Tang of it in your Duties: It is as if the Heart a few Minutes since plunged in the World were now at the Feet of God, just as with the Sea after a Storm.

...m, which still continues working muddy, and dis-
 ...t, though the Wind be laid and Storm over; thy
 ...rt must have some Time to settle. There are few
 ...ficians that can take down a Lute or Viol, and
 ...presently upon it, without some Time to tune it;
 ...e are few Christians can presently say, as Psal.
 7. O God my Heart is fixed, it is fixed. O
 ...n thou goest to God in any Duty, take thy Heart
 ...e, and say, O my Soul, I am now addressing my-
 ...to the greatest Work that ever a Creature was
 ...loyed about: I am going into the awful presence
 ...God about Business of everlasting Life.

Oh my Soul, leave trifling now, be composed,
 ...chful, serious, this is no common Work, 'tis God-
 ...k, Soul-work, Eternity-work, I am now going
 ...n or bearing Seed, which will bring forth Fruit to
 ...e or Death in the World to come; pause a while
 ...n thy Sins, Wants, Troubles; address thyself to
 ...y. David first mused, and then spake with his
 ...gue, Psal. xxxix. 3, 4. So Psal. xlv. 1. My Heart
 ...diting, &c.

Help. Having composed thy Heart by previous
 ...itation, presently set a Guard upon thy Senses:
 ...w often are poor Christians in Danger of losing the
 ...s of their Mind, by those of their Body; for this
 ...covenanted with his Senses, Chap. xxxi. 1. For
 ...David prayed, Psal. cxix. 37. Turn away mine
 ...s from beholding Vanity, and quicken thou me in
 ...Way. This may serve to expound that mystical
 ...bian Proverb, which advises to shut the Windows,
 ...the House may be light: 'twere excellent if you
 ...d say in your onsets upon Duty, as an holy one
 ...e did, when he came off from Duty: Claudimini
 ...i mei claudimini, &c. Be shut, O mine Eyes, be

shut: for it is impossible you should ever see Beauty and Glory in any Creature, as I have now seen in God. You had need avoid all Occasions of Distraction from without, for be sure you will meet enough from within, intention of Spirit in the Word of God locks up the Eye and Ear against Vanity. When Marcellus entered the Gates of Syracuse, Archimedes was so intent about his Mathematical Scheme that he took no Notice of the Soldiers when they entered his very Study with drawn Swords; a fervent cannot be a vagrant Heart.

3. Help. Beg of God a mortified Fancy. A working Fancy (saith one) how much soever it extoll'd among Men, is a great Snare to the Soul, except it work in Fellowship with right Reason, and sanctified Heart: The Phantasy is a Power of the Soul placed between the Senses and the Understanding, 'tis that which first stirs its self in the Soul, by its Motion the other Powers are stirred, 'tis a common Shop where Thoughts are first forged and framed; and as this is, so are they; if Imagination be not first cast down, 'tis impossible that every Thought of the Heart should be brought into Obedience to Christ, 2 Cor. x. 5. This Fancy is naturally the wildest and most untameable Power in the Soul. Some Christians (especially such as are of cold and dry Constitutions) have much to do with it.

And truly, the more spiritual the Heart is, the more 'tis troubled about the Vanity and Wildness of it. what a sad Thing it is! that thy nobler Soul may lackey up and down after a vain roving Fancy, that such a Beggar should ride on Horseback, and such a Prince run after it on Foot; that it should call off the Soul from Attendance upon God, when it is most sweet

etly engaged in Communion with him: To profess
e such Vanities as it will start at such Times before
Beg earnestly of God, that the Power of Sanctifi-
ion may once come upon it. Some Christians have
ained such a Degree of Sanctification of their Fan-
s, that they have had much sweetness left upon their
arts by the spiritual Workings of it in the Night-
son: When thy Fancy is more mortified, thy
oughts will be more orderly and fixed.

4. Help. If thou wouldest keep thy Heart from
se vain Excursions, realize to thyself by Faith, the
y and awful presence of God in Duties.
If the presence of a grave Man will compose us to
iousness, how much more the presence of an holy
d? Think'st thou, thy Soul durst be so garrish and
nt, if the Sense of a Divine Eye were upon it? Re-
mber the Place where thou art is the Place of his
et, Isa. lx. 13. Act Faith upon the Omniscieny of
d, All the Churches shall know that I am he that
rcheth the Heart, and trieth the Reins, and I will
e to every one of you according to your Works,
v. ii. 23. All Things are naked and open to the
es of him with whom we have to do. Heb. iv. 12.
alize his infinite Holiness; into what a serious com-
ed Frame did the sight of God in his Holiness put
Spirit of the Prophet? Isa. vi. 5. Labour to get
upon thy Heart due Apprehensions of the Great-
s of God, such as Abraham had, Gen. xviii. 27.
at am but Dust and Ashes, have taken upon me to
ak to God: And lastly, Remember the Jealousy
God, how tender he is over his Worship, Lev. x. 3.
d Moses said unto Aaron, this is that the Lord spake,
ing, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me,
before all the People I will be glorified.

A Man that is praying (saith Bernard) should have himself as if he were entering into the Court Heaven, where he sees the Lord upon his Throne surrounded with Ten Thousand of his Angels and Saints ministering unto him. When thou comest to a Duty, in which thy Heart hath been toying and wandring, thou may'st say, verily God was in this Place, and I knew it not. Suppose all the Impediments and Vanities which have past through thy Heart in a Duty were written out, and interlined with thy Petitions, couldst thou have the Face to present to God? Should thy Tongue but utter all the Thoughts of thy Heart in Prayer, would not Men abhor thee? Why, thy Thoughts are vocal to God, Psal. cxxxix. If thou wert petitioning thy King for thy Life, would it not provoke him to see thee playing with thy Bagpipes, Strings, or catching every Fly that lights upon thy Cloaths whilst thou art speaking to him about so serious Matters? O think sadly upon that Scripture Psal. lxxxvii. 7. God is greatly to be feared in the Assemblies of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him. Why did God descend in Thunderings and Lightenings, and dwell in Clouds upon Sinai, Exod. ix. 16. 18. Why did the Mountains smoke under him, the People quake and tremble round about him, yea, Moses himself not excepted, but to teach the People that great Truth Heb. xii. 28, 29. Let us have Grace, whereby we may serve him acceptably with reverence and godly Fear, for our God is a consuming Fire: Present this before thee, and thy vain Heart will quickly be reduced to a more serious Frame.

5. Help. Maintain a praying Frame of Heart in the Intervals of Duty; What is the Reason our Heart

so dull, careless, and wandering, when we come to hear or pray, but because there have been such long intermissions in our Communion with God; by Reason whereof the Heart is out of a praying Frame: If at Spiritual Warmth, those holy Impressions we carry from God in one Duty, were but preserved to kindle another Duty, it would be of marvellous Advantage to keep the Heart intent and serious with God.

To this Purpose those intermediate Ejaculations, be-
fixt stated and solemn Duties, are of most sweet and excellent Use; by these, one Duty is as it were linked another, and so the Soul as it were wraps up itself in a Chain of Duties. That Christian seldom misses his Mark in solemn Duty, that shoots up many of these Darts in the Intervals of Duty; 'tis an excellent commendation Christ bestows upon the Spouse, Cant.

ii. Thy Lips, O my Spouse, drop as the Honey-comb: Upon which Text one gives this sweet Note, the Honey-comb drops actually but sometimes, but it always hangs full of sweet Drops ready to fall; if our ejaculations were more, our Lamentations upon this account would be fewer.

6. Help. Endeavour to engage and raise thy Affections to God in Duty, if thou wouldest have thy distractions cured.

A dropping Eye, and a melting Heart, are seldom troubled as others upon this Account: When the Soul is intent about any Work, it gathers in its Strength, and bends all the Thoughts about it; and when its heart is deeply affected, it will be intent, the Affections command the Thoughts to go after them, Deadness causes distraction, and Distraction increases Deadness; could you but look upon Duties as the Galleries of Communion, in which you walk with God, where your Souls

may be filled with those ravishing, and matchless lights that are in his Presence, your Soul would offer to stir from thence.

It is with the Heart in Duty, as it is with those that dig for Gold Oar; they try here, and finding no try there; and so go from Place to Place, till at last they hit upon the rich Vein, and there they sit down. If thy Heart could but once hit the rich Vein in Duty, it would dwell and abide there with Delight and Constancy. O how I love thy Law, it is my Meditation Day and Night! Psal. cxix. 97. The Soul cannot dwell Day and Night upon its Knees, when once its Delights, Loves, and Desires are engaged. What are the Reason your Hearts are so shuffling, especially in secret Duties? Why are you ready to be gone almost as soon as you are come into the Presence of God? But because your Affections are not engaged.

7. Help. Mourn over the Matter to God, and desire his Assistance from Heaven, when vain Thoughts afflict thy Heart in Duty.

When the Messenger of Satan buffeted Paul with wicked Injections, as is supposed, he goes to God, and mourns over it before him, 2 Cor. xii. 8. Never let slight wandering Thoughts in Duty as small Matters follow every vain Thought with a deep Sigh, turn to God with such Words as these, Lord I came hither to speak with thee, and here a busy Devil, and a vain Heart, conspiring together, have set upon me. O my God! what an Heart have I? Shall I never wait upon thee without Distraction? When shall I enjoy an Hour of free Communion with thee? Help me my God this once; do but display thy Glory before mine Eyes, and my Heart shall quickly be covered: Thou knowest I came hither to enjoy thee

And shall I go away without thee? See, how the Heart
thy poor Child works towards thee! Strives to get
near thee, but cannot: My Heart is aground, come
thou North-wind, blow South-wind. O for a fresh
gale now from thy Spirit, to set my Affections afloat!
Wouldst thou but thus affectionately bewail thy Dis-
affections to God, thou mightest obtain Help and Deli-
verance from them: He would say to Satan, and thine
imperious Lusts, as Ahasuerus said of Haman, What!
Will he force the Queen before my Face? Who are
these, that set upon my Child in my Work, and Pre-
sence?

8. Help. Look upon the Success and Sweetness of
thy Duties, as very much depending upon the keep-
ing of thy Heart close with God in them.

These Two Things, the Success, and Sweetness of
Duty, are as dear to a Christian as his Two Eyes;
and both of these must necessarily be lost, if the Heart
be lost in Duty, Job xxxv. 13. Surely God heareth
not Vanity, neither doth the Almighty regard it: The
promise is made to an Heart engaged, Jer. xxix. 13.
Then shall you seek me, and find me, when ye shall
search for me with all your Heart. Well then, when
thou findest thy Heart under the Power of Deadness
and Distraction, say to thy Soul, O what do I lose by
this careless Heart now! My praying Times are the
choicest Parts, the golden Spots of all my Time;
should I but get up this Heart with God, I might now
obtain such Mercies as would be matter for a Song to
all eternity.

9. Help. Look upon it as a great Discovery of
the Sincerity, or Hypocrisy of your Hearts accord-
ing as you find them, careful, or careless in this
Matter.

Nothing

Nothing will startle an upright Heart more than this: What shall I give way to a customary wandring of Heart from God? Shall the Spot of the Hypocrite appear upon my Soul? They indeed can drudge in the round of Duty, never regarding the Frames of their Hearts, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. But shall I do so? When Men come into the Presence-chamber, and the King is not there, they Bow to the empty Chair. Never let me be satisfied with empty Duties! Never let me take my Leave of a Duty, until mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.

10. Help. Lastly, 'Twill be of special Use to keep thine Heart with God in Duties, to consider what Influence all thy Duties have into thy eternity.

These are your Seed Times, and what you sow in your Duties in this World, you must look to reap the Fruit of it in another World, Gal. vi. 7, 8. If you sow to the Flesh, of that you shall reap corrupt; but if to the Spirit, Life everlasting. O my Soul, answer seriously, wouldst thou be willing to reap the Fruit of Vanity, in the World to come? Darest thou say, when thy Thoughts are roving to the Ends of the Earth in Duty, when thou scarce mindest what thou sayest or hearest, now Lord, I am sowing to the Spirit; now I am providing and laying up for Eternity, now I am seeking for Glory, Honour, and Immortality; now I am striving to enter in at the strait Gate, now I am taking the Kingdom of Heaven by an holy Violence? O such a Consideration as this, should make the Multitudes of vain Thoughts that press in upon thy Heart in Duty, to fly seven Ways before it. And thus I have shewn you how to keep your Hearts in the Times of Duty.

7. Season. "The Seventh Season calling for more than common Diligence to keep the Heart, is, when we receive Injuries and Abuses from Men; such is the Depravedness and Corruption of Man in his collapsed State, that *Homo homini Lupus*, one Man is become a Wolf, a Tyger to another; they are, as the Prophet complains, *Hab. i. 14.* As the Fishes of the Sea, and as the creeping Things that have no Ruler over them; and as wicked Men are cruel and oppressive one to another, so they conspire together to abuse and wrong the People of God, as the same Prophet complains, *ver. 13.* The Wicked devour^{eth} the Man that is more righteous than he. Now when we are thus abused and wronged, 'tis hard to keep the Heart from revengeful Motions; to make it meekly and quietly to commit the Cause to him that judgeth righteously; to exercise no other Affection but Pity towards them that abuse us. Surely the Spirit that is in us lusteth to revenge, but it must not be so: You have choice Helps in the Gospel to keep down your Hearts from such sinful Motions against your Enemies, and to sweeten your imbittered Spirits;" the Seventh Case therefore shall be

7. Case. How a Christian may keep his Heart from revengeful Motions, under the greatest Injuries and Abuses from Men?

The Gospel indeed allows a Liberty to vindicate our Innocency, and assert our Rights; but not to vent our Corruptions, and invade God's right; when therefore thou findest thy Heart begin to be inflamed by revengeful Motions, presently apply the following Remedies; and the First is this.

I. Rem.

1. Rem. Urge upon thy Heart the severe Prohibitions of Revenge by the Law of God. Remember that this is forbidden Fruit, how pleasing and delicious soever it be to our vitiated Appetites. O false Nature, Revenge is sweet; O but saith God, the Effect thereof shall be bitter: How plainly hath God interdicted this Fleish-pleasing Sin, Prov. xx. 22. Say not, I will recompence Evil. Prov. xxiv. 29. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me. Rom. xii. 17. Recompence to no Man Evil for Evil: and verily, Vengeance not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath. Nay, that's not all, but Prov. xxv. 21. If thine Enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Thy Word feed him, as Criticks observe, signifies to feed cheerfully and tenderly, as Birds do their young Ones. The Scripture is a great Friend to the Peace and Tranquillity of Humane Societies, which can never be preserved, if Revenge be not deposed: It was wont to be an Argument urged by the Christians to prove the Religion to be supernatural and pure, that it forbids Revenge which is so sweet to Nature; and verily 'tis a thousand Pities such an Argument should be lost. We then, awe your Hearts with the Authority of God in these Scriptures; and when carnal Reason saith, mine Enemy deserves to be hated; let Conscience reply, but doth God deserve to be disobeyed? Thus, and thus hath he done, and so he hath wronged me; but what hath God done that I should wrong him? If he dare be so bold to break the Peace, shall I be so wicked to break the Precept? If he fears not to wrong me, shall not I fear to wrong God? O let the Fear of God's Threatenings repress such sinful Motions.

2. Rem. Set before your Eyes the most eminent Pattern

Patterns of Meekness and Forgiveness, that your Souls
may fall in love with it.

This is the way to cut off those common-pleas of
the Flesh for Revenge: As thus, no Man would bear
such an Affront; yes, such and such have borne as bad
and worse; I shall be reckoned a Coward, a Fool, if
I pass by this; no matter, as long as I follow the Ex-
amples of the wisest and most holy Men; never did any
suffer more and greater Abuses from Men than Christ did,
and never did any carry it more peaceably and forgiv-
ingly, Isa. liii. 7. He was oppressed, and he was afflict-
ed, yet he opened not his Mouth; he is brought as a
lamb to the Slaughter, &c. This Pattern the Apostle
sets before you for your Imitation, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22, 23.
For even hereunto are you called, because Christ also
suffered for us, leaving us an Example that we should
follow his Steps: Who when he was reviled, reviled
not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but
committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.
To be of a meek forgiven Spirit is Christ-like, God-
like, then shall you be the Children of your Father
which is in Heaven, for he maketh the Sun to rise up-
on the Evil, and upon the Good, and sendeth Rain on
the Just, and on the Unjust, Mat. v. 45. How emi-
nent also did this Spirit of Christ rest upon his A-
postles, never were there such Men upon Earth for
the excellency of Spirit. None were ever abused
more, or suffered their Abuses better; Being reviled
(say they) we bless, being persecuted we suffer it,
being defamed we intreat, 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. Mr.
Calvin, though a quick Spirit, yet had attained such
a Degree of this Christ-like Forgiveness, that when
Luther had used some opprobrious Language of him,
the good Man said no more but this, Although he
should

should call me Devil, yet I will acknowledge him be an eminent Servant of Jesus Christ.

I have often heard it reported of holy Mr. Doct that when one enraged at his close convincing Doctrine, pick'd a Quarrel with him, smote him on the Face, and dash'd out two of his Teeth; this meeke Servant of Christ spit out the Teeth and Blood in his Hand, and said, see there, you have knock'd out two of my Teeth, and that without any just Provocation; but on Condition I might do your Soul good, would give you leave to dash out all the rest; here is the Excellency of a Christian's Spirit, above all the Attainments of Moral Heathens: Though they were excellent at many other Things, yet they could never attain this forgiving Spirit; it is the first Office of Justice (said Tully) to hurt no body, unless first provoked by an Injury; whereupon Lactantius, *quam simplicem veramque sententiam duorum verborum, adjectione corruptit!* What a dainty Sentence spoiled the Orator by adding those two last Words Strive then for this Excellency of Spirit, which is the proper Excellency of Christians; do some singular Thing that others cannot do, and then you will have a Testimony in their Consciences: When Moses out-did the Magicians, they were forced to confess the Finger of God in that Business.

3. Remedy. Consider well the quality of the Person that hath wronged thee, either he is a good Man or a wicked Man that hath done thee the Injury; if he be a good Man, there is Light and Tenderneſs in his Conscience, and that will bring him at last to a Sense of the Evil he hath done; however Christ hath forgiven him greater Injuries than these, and why shouldest not thou? Will Christ upbraid him with any of those Wrongs done

him, but frankly forgives him all; and wilt thou take
by the Throat for some petty Abuse that he hath
done to thee?

Or is he a wicked Man? If so, truly you have more
to exercise Pity than Revenge towards him, and
upon a double Account: For, (1.) He is beside
himself, so indeed is every unconverted Sinner, Luke
17. Should you go into Bedlam and there hear
him rail at you, another mock you, and a third
threaten you, would you say I will be revenged upon
him? No, you would rather go away pitying them;
poor Creatures they are out of their Wits, and
know not what they do. Besides, (2.) There is a
day coming, if they repent not, when they will
have more Misery than you can find in your Hearts
with them: You need not study Revenge, God's
vengeance sleepeth not, and will shortly take place
upon them; and is not that enough? Have they not
Eternity of Misery coming? If they repent not,
it must be the Portion of their Cup; and if ever
they do repent, they will be ready to make you Re-
paration.

4. Rem. Keep down thy Heart by this Considera-
tion, That by Revenge thou canst but satisfy a Lust,
but by Forgiveness, thou shalt conquer a Lust.

Suppose, by Revenge thou shouldst destroy one
Enemy, I will shew thee how by forgiving thou shalt
conquer three; thine own Lust, the Devil's Tempta-
tion, and thine Enemy's Heart: And is not this a
more glorious Conquest? If by Revenge thou over-
come thine Enemy, yet (as Bernard saith) Infelix
Victoria, ubi superans virum, succumbit vitio: Un-
happy Victory, when by overcoming another Man,
thou art overcome by thine own Corruption; by this
Way

Way you may obtain a glorious Conquest indeed. What an honourable and dry Victory did David the Way obtain over Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. And came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these Words, that Saul lift up his Voice and wept and he said to David, thou art more righteous than I.

It must be a very disingenious Nature indeed, upon which Meekness and Forgiveness will not work; a stony Heart which this Fire will not melt: To this Sense is that, Prov. xxvi. 21. If thine Enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap Coals of Fire upon his Head. Some will have it a Sin punishing Fire; but others, a Heart-melting Fire: To be sure, 'twill either melt the Heart, or aggravate his Misery. Augustine thinks that Stephen's Prayer for his Enemies was the great means of Paul's Conversion.

5. Rem. Seriously propound this Question to thy own Heart, have I got any Good by the Wrongs and Injuries received, or have I not? If they have done you no good, turn the Revenge upon yourselves. that I should have such a bad Heart, that can get no good out of such Troubles. O that my Spirit should be so unlike to Christ's! the Patience and Meekness of other Christians have turned all the Injuries thrown upon them into precious Stones, the Spirits of others have been raised in blessing God when they have been loaded with Reproaches by the World, they have bound them as an Ornament to their Necks. Superbus fui (said Luther) quod video nomen possimum mihi erescere. I could even be proud upon it, that I have a bad Name among wicked Men: To the same Purpose Jerom sweetly, Gratias ago Deo meo quod dignus sum quem mundus oderit. I thank my God, that I am

worth

worthy to be hated of the World. Thus their Hearts are provoked by Injuries to magnify God, and bless him for them; if it work contrary with me, I have use enough to be filled with Self-displacency.

If you have got any good by them, if the Reproaches and Wrongs you have received, have made you search your Hearts the more, watch your Ways the more narrowly; if their wronging you, have made you see how you have wronged God, then let me say for them as he did for himself, pray forgive them this Wrong.

What! Can you not find an Heart to forgive one that hath been instrumental of so much Good to you, 'tis strange! What though they meant it evil, yet if it hath turned it to Good, you have no more Reason to take against the Instrument, than he who had received a Wound from his Enemy, which only brake and burst out that Imposthume, which otherwise had been his death.

6. Rem. 'Tis of excellent Use to keep the Heart from Revenge, to look up and eye the first Cause by which all our Troubles are ordered.

This will calm and meeken our Spirits quickly; never did a wicked Tongue try the Patience of a Saint more than David's was tried by that railing Shimei; the Spirit of this good Man was not at all poisoned with Revenge, though he goes along cursing and casting Stones at him all the Way; yea, though Abishai urged David, if he pleased, the Head of that Enemy; the King said, What have I to do with you, ye men of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the Lord said unto him, curse David; who shall then say, therefore hast thou done so? It may be, God uses him as his Rod to lash me, because I by my Sin made his Enemies to blaspheme him: And shall I be angry with

the Rod? How irrational were that? This also was that quieted Job; he doth not rail, and vow Revenge upon the Chaldeans and Sabeans, but eyes God the Orderer of those Troubles, and is quiet. The Lord hath taken away, blessed be his Name, Job i. 21.

Object. But you will say, To turn aside the right of a Man, to subvert a Man in his Cause, the Lord approveth not, Lam. iii. 36.

Ans. True, but though it fall not under his approving, yet it doth under his permitting Will, and there is a great Argument for quiet Submission in that; nay, hath not only the permitting, but the ordering of those Troubles; did we see more of an holy God, should shew less of a corrupt Nature in such Trials.

7. Rem. Consider how you daily wrong God, and you will not be so easily inflamed with revenge against others that have wronged you.

You are daily grieving and wronging God, and he hears, forgives, and will not take Vengeance upon you; and will you be so quick in revenging yourself upon others. O what a sharp and terrible Rebuke that, Matt. xviii. 32. 33. O thou wicked and slothful Servant, I forgave thee all that Debt because thou didst not; shouldst not thou also have had Compassion on thy fellow Servant, even as I had pity on thee? None should be filled so with the Bowels of Pity, Forgiveness, and Mercy, to such as wrong them as thou should be that have experienced the riches of Mercy themselves; methinks the Mercy of God to us should melt our very Bowels into Mercy themselves: it is impossible we can be cruel to others, except we forget how kind Christ hath been to us; those that have found Mercy should shew Mercy; if Kindness cannot work it, methinks Fear should: If we forgive not Men their Trespases

espaffes, neither will your Father forgive your Tref-
fes, Matt. vi. 11.

Rem. Lastly, Let the Consideration of the Day
the Lord, which draweth nigh, with-hold your
parts from anticipating it by Acts of Revenge.

Why are ye fo quick? Is not the Lord at Hand to
venge all his abused Servants? Be patient therefore
Brethren unto the coming of the Lord: Behold
Husbandman waiteth, &c. Be ye alfo patient, for
coming of the Lord draws nigh; grudge not one
againft another, Brethren, left ye be condemned. Be-
hold the Judge standeth at the Door, Jam. v. 7, 8, 9.
This Text affords three Arguments againft Revenge.

The Lord's near Approach. (2.) This Example
of the Husbandman's Patience. (3.) The Danger we
run upon ourfelves by anticipating God's Judgment:
Revenge is mine, faith the Lord; he will diftribute
Justice more equally and impartially than you can;
ye that believe they have a God to right them, will
do fo much wrong themfelves as to avenge their own
Injuries.

Obj. But Flefh and Blood are not able to bear
the Abufes.

Ans. If you resolve to confult Flefh and Blood in fuch
Cases, and do no more but what that will enable you
to, never pretend to Religion. Chriftians muft do
fingular and fupernatural Things.

Obj. 2. But if I pack up fuch Abufes I fhall be
reckoned a Fool, and every one will trample upon

Ans. (1.) You may be reckoned fo among Fools,
if God and good Men will account it your Wifdom,
to bear the Excellency of your Spirit. (2.) It muft be a
strong Spirit indeed that will trample upon a meek and

forgiving Christian: And thus learn to keep your Hearts from Revenge under all your Provocations.

8. Season. "The next Season in which we are in Danger of losing our Hearts is, when we meet with great Crosses and Provocations; then sinful Passions are apt to transport the Heart; 'tis the Fault of many good Men to be of hasty and quick Spirits when provoked, though they dare not concoct Anger into Malice; for that would be a Note of Wickedness, yet are they very incident to sudden Anger, which is a Sign of Wickedness. Beza, in the Life of Calvin observes, *Bez. in Cal. pa.* That he was of a keen and hasty Spirit; and he that writes the Life of great Cameron saith, that his Anger was soon stirred towards his near and familiar Friends, but then he would easily depose it, and acknowledge his Weakness; and when Provocations and Trials of our Patience come, we know not what Spirit we are of." The eighth Case therefore is this,

8. Case. How the Heart may be kept meek and patient under great Crosses and Provocations.

There are three Sorts of Anger, natural, holy, and sinful Anger. (1.) Natural, which is nothing else but the Motion of the irascible Appetite towards an offensive Object; and this in itself is no Sin, they are Passions rather than Passions; the Infelicities rather than the Sins of Nature, as Jerom calls them! Reason (saith Plutarch) is the Driver, the Soul is the Chariot, and the two Horses that draw it on in all its Motions are the concupiscent and irascible Appetites, when these are rightly managed by Reason, they are not only lawful but very useful to the Soul. God will

have us to be stupid and insensate, though he would
we us to be meek and patient; in Eph. iv. 26. He
shows the natural Motion, but forbids the sinful Exor-
tancy. (2.) Holy Anger, which is a pure Flame,
kindled by an heavenly Spark of Love to God, and
Scripture is called Real, which is, as (one faith) the
Anger which Love draws in God's Quarrel. Such
as Lot's against the Sodomites, and that of Moses
against the Idolatrous Israelites. When Servetus con-
demned Zwinglius for his Harshness, his Answer was,
alii mansuetus ero, in blasphemis in Christum non
; in other Cases I will be mild, but in the Cause of
Christ, not so. That which the World calls Modera-
tion and Mildness here, is in God's Account Stupidity
and Cowardliness; neither of these are that which I
am now persuading you to keep your Hearts against.
(3.) There is sinful Passion, that's the Thing
which endangers you. Now Anger becomes sinful
when 'tis either causeless, Mat. v. 22. or excessive,
and that either in Measure or Time, exceeding the
value of the impulsive Cause, be it more transient or
lasting, yet 'tis a Sin, and is matter of Humiliation
before God. Now the Means to keep the Heart
from it under Provocations, are these.

I. Means. Get low and humble Thoughts of your-
selves, and then you will have meek Spirits, and
peaceable Deportments towards others.

The humble is ever the patient Man, Pride is the
root of Passion, a lofty will be a surly Spirit: Blad-
gers blown up with Wind will not lie close together;
they prick them, and you may pack a Thousand in a
small Room, only by Pride cometh Contention, Prov.
i. 10. When we over-rate ourselves, then we think
we are unworthily treated by others, and that pro-

vokes; and here (by the way) take notice of great Benefit of Acquaintance with your own Heart, even the meekening and calming of your Spirit. Christian, methinks thou shouldst know so much thyself, that 'tis impossible any should lay thee low or have baser Thoughts of thee than thou hast of thyself. Some render the Original of the Text, Heb. ii. 'Thus the proud Man is as he that transgresseth Wine, and Drunkards you know are quarrelsome. get more Humility, and that will bring you more Peace.'

2. Means. Be often sweetening your Spirits with Communion with God, and they will not easily be bittered with Wrath towards Men,

A quiet Conscience never produced an unquiet Conversation: The Peace of God doth rule in our Heart, as an Umpire, in appeasing Strifes, forasmuch that Word, Col. iii. 15. imports; Wrath and Strife are hugely opposite to the Frame and Temper of a spiritual Heart, because inconsistent with the Light and Contentment of that Dove-like Spirit, which loves a sedate and quiet Breast. O! saith a Soul that feeds upon the sweet Communion of the Spirit, shall the Sparkles of Provocations now catch in my Passions, and raise such a Smoak in my Soul as will offend and drive away the Comforter from me? This is so effectual a Remedy against Passion, that I dare almost venture in a Christian of a hasty Nature to make Long-suffering a Sign of Communion with God. Seest thou such a Christian quiet and calm under Provocations, 'tis very like his Soul feeds upon the Sweetness in God as he is loath to leave: And on the other Side, seest thou a Christian turbulent and clamorous, doubtless all is not well with

is Spirit is like a Bone out of joint, which cannot move without Pain and Trouble.

3. Means. Get due Apprehensions of the evil nature and effects of sinful Anger: *Ira furor brevis*, Anger is a short Madness (saith one :) *Ira animæ* (saith another) Anger is the Fever of the Soul, is the Interregnum and Eclipse of Reason (saith a third.)

The Effects of it also are very sad.

(1.) It grieves the Spirit of God, Eph. iv. 30. banishes him from that Breast in which it rages and multitudes. God is the God of Peace; the Presence and Comforts of God are only enjoyed in a calm: 'Tis a golden Note one gives upon the forecited Text, God doth not usually bless with Peace of Conscience such as make no Conscience of Peace. (2.) It gives Advantage to the Devil, Eph. iv. 26, 27. Satan is an angry and discontented Spirit, and finds no Rest but in restless Hearts; he lives like the Salamander in fires of Contention, he bestirs himself when the Spirits are in a Commotion; sometimes he fills the Heart with revengeful Thoughts, sometime he fills the Lips, and inflames the Tongue with undecent Language; even a meer Moses sometimes spake unadvisedly with his Lips. (3.) It untunes the Spirit for Duty; upon this Account the Apostle dissuades Husbands and Wives from jarring Carriages and Contentions, that their Prayers be not hindered, 1 Pet. iii. 7. All Acts of Worship must be suitable to the Object of Worship; but God is the God of Peace, the God of Love. (4.) To mention no more, it disparages the Christian Religion. How would Plato and Pythagoras shame us if they were now living: Christ was a Lamb for Meekness, and doth it become his Followers to be

like Lions? O keep your Hearts, or you will at once lose, not only your own Peace, but the Credit of Religion.

4. Means. Consider how sweet a Thing it is to a Christian to conquer his Corruptions and carry away the Spoils of them.

He that is slow to Anger, is better than the mightiest, and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City. Prov. xvi. 32. Is there any Content in venting a Passion? How much more in mortifying it? When thou comest to a calm mood or upon a Death-bed to review thy Life, how comfortable then will it be, to reflect upon the Conquests thou hast got by the Fear of God over the evil Propensions of thine own Heart! 'Twas a memorable Saying of Valentinian the Emperor, when he came to die; amongst all my Conquests (said he) there is but one that now comforts me; and being asked what that was, he answered, I have overcome my worst Enemy mine own naughty Heart.

Means. Shame yourselves by setting before you those eminent Patterns that have been most excellent for Meekness.

Above all, compare your Spirits with the Spirit of Christ; Learn of me (saith he) for I am meek and lowly, Mat. xi. 29. Christ was meek and lowly, but I am proud and passionate; it was the highest Commendation of Moses, Numb. xii. 3. Now the Man Moses was meek above all the Men of the Earth, and this was the Man that knew God face to face. 'Tis said of Calvin and Urfin, that they both were of cholerick Natures, but yet had so learned the Meekness of Christ, as not to utter one Word under the greatest Provocation unbecoming Religion. When

read the pretty Stories of the very Heathens, that ever had the Advantage we have, how the Pathegoans, whatever Fewds had been among them in the day, would hush all by sending to each other this Message, The Sun is almost set; and that of Plato his Scholar, I would beat thee if I were not angry. When I read what Lenity and Tenderneſs Lyncurgus ſhewed to an insolent Fellow that had ſtruck out one of his Eyes, I am aſhamed to ſee how much Chriſtians are out-ſhot by Heathens, who by meer moral Arguments and Precepts, had thus meekned their Spirits and conquered their Paſſions; the dim light of Nature could teach Seneca to ſay, That Anger will hurt Man more than the Offence; but I know not how my Anger will carry me. 'Tis a ſhame that theſe Men who come ſo far behind us in means and Advantages, ſhould ſo far out-ſtrip us in Meekneſs and Patience.

Means 6. Laſtly, Avoid all irritating Occaſions.

He that will not hear the Clapper, muſt not pull the Rope; grievous Words ſtir up Anger (ſaith Solomon) Prov. xv. 1. Do not only pray, and reſolve againſt it, but get as far as you can out of the Way of it; 'tis true Spiritual Valour to run as faſt, and as far as we can out of Sin's way: If you can but avoid Anger in its firſt Riſe, there is no great Fear of it afterwards; for it is not with this Sin as it is with other Sins; other Sins grow to their full Strength by Degrees, their firſt Motions are the weakeſt; but this Sin is born in its full Strength, 'tis ſtrongeſt at firſt, withſtand it then, and it falls before you. Thus learn to keep your Hearts when Provocations ariſe.

Season 9. The ninth Season of exerting our greateſt Diligence, " Is the critical Hour of Temptation, " wherein

" wherein Satan lays close Siege to the Fort-Royal
 " a Christian's Heart, and often surprizes it for want
 " of watchfulness: to keep thy Heart now, is no less
 " a Mercy than a Duty; few Christians are so well
 " skilled in detecting the Fallacies, and retorting the
 " Arguments by which Satan uses to draw them into
 " Sin, as to come off safe in those encounters. Watch
 " and pray (saith our Lord) lest ye enter into Temptation,
 " tion, Mark xiv. 38. Even an eminent David and
 " a wise Solomon have smarted for their carelessness
 " such a Time as this." The ninth Case therefore
 shall be this.

Case 9. How a Christian, when strongly solicited by the Devil to Sin, may keep his Heart from yielding in the Temptation.

Now there are Six special Arguments by which Satan subtly insinuates and winds in the temptation in all which I shall offer thee some Help for the keeping of thy Heart; and the first is this.

Arg. 1. The first Argument is drawn from the Pleasure of Sin: O (saith Satan) here is Pleasure to be enjoyed; The Temptation comes with a smiling Countenance and charming Voice; What art thou so flegmatick and dull a Soul, as not to feel the powerful Charms of Pleasures; Who can withhold himself from such Delight.

Now thine Heart may be kept from the Danger of this Temptation, by retorting this Argument of Pleasure upon the Tempter; which is done two Ways.

1. Thou tellest me Satan that Sin is pleasant; is it so; but are the Gripes of Conscience, and the Flames of Hell so too? Is it pleasant to feel the Wounds and Throbs of Conscience; if so, Why did David cry out of broken Bones, Psal. li. I hear what

Thou sayest of the Pleasure of Sin, and I have read that David hath said of the terrible Effects of Sin in his Psalm to bring to Remembrance. Psal. xxxviii. 2. Thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presseth me sore. Ver. 3. There is no Soundness in my Flesh because of thine Anger: neither is there any rest in my Bones because of my Sin. Ver. 4. For mine iniquities are gone over mine Head as an heavy Burden; they are too heavy for me. Ver. 5. My Wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my Foolishness. Ver. 6. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I am in Mourning all the Day long. Ver. 7. My Loins are filled with a loathsome Disease, and there is no Soundness in my Flesh. Ver. 8. I am feeble and sore broken, I have roared by reason of the Disquietness of my Heart.

Here I see the true Face of Sin, if I yield to thy Temptation, I must either feel these Pangs of Conscience, or the Flames of Hell.

2. What talkest thou of the Pleasure of Sin, when by Experience I know there is more true Pleasure in the Mortification, than can be in the Commission of Sin. O how sweet is it to please God, to obey Conscience, to preserve inward Peace, to be able to say, In this Trial I have discovered the Sincerity of my Heart; now I know I fear the Lord, now I see that I truly hate Sin. Hath Sin any such Delight as this? This will choak that Temptation.

Arg. 2. The Second Argument is drawn from the Secrecy of Sin; O (saith Satan) this Sin will never disgrace thee abroad, none shall know it.

This Argument may be retorted, and the Heart secured thus: Thou sayest, none shall know it, but Satan, canst thou find a Place void of the Divine Presence

fence for me to sin in? Thus Job secured his Heart from this Temptation, Job xiii. 4. Doth he not keep my Ways and count all my Steps? Therefore he makes a Covenant with his Eyes, ver. 1. After the same manner Solomon teaches us to retort this Temptation, Prov. v. 20, 21. And why my Son wilt thou be ravished with a strange Woman, and embrace the Bosom of a Stranger? For the Ways of Man are before the Eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his Goings. What if I hide it from the Eyes of all the World for the present, I cannot hide it from God; and the Time is at hand, when all the World shall know it too; for the Word assures me, Luke viii. 17. That what is done now in secret shall be proclaimed as upon the House-top. Besides, is not my Conscience a thousand Witnesses? Do I owe no Reverence to myself? Could the Heathen Men say, turpe quid ausurus, to sine teste time, when thou art tempted to commit Sin, fear thyself without any other Witnesses and shall not I be afraid to sin before mine own Conscience, which always hath a Reproof in its Mouth or a Pen in its Hand, to record my most secret Actions?

Arg. 3. The Third Argument by which Satan tempteth to sin, is taken from the Gain and Profit arising out of it: Why so nice and scrupulous? Thou but stretch Conscience a little, and thou mayest make thyself; Now is thy Opportunity.

The Heart may be kept from falling into this dangerous Snare, by returning the Temptation thus: But what Profit will it be, if a Man should gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul? Mat. xvi. 26. O my Soul, my precious Soul! Shall I hazard thee for all the

God that is in this World? There is an immortal Spirit dwelling in this fleshly Tabernacle, of more value than all earthly Things, which must live to all eternity, when this World shall lie in white Ashes: A Soul for which Jesus Christ shed his precious and invaluable Blood. I was sent into this World to provide for this Soul; indeed God hath also committed to me the Care of my Body, but (as one happily expresses it) with this Difference; a Master commits two Things to his Servant, the Child, and the Child's Cloaths; Will the Master thank the Servant, if he plead, I have kept the Cloaths, *p. 3.* but I have neglected the Life of the Child.

Arg. 4. The fourth Argument is drawn from the smallness of the Sin; 'Tis but a little one, a small Matter, a Trifle; who would stand upon such niceties?

This Argument may be retorted three Ways.

1. But is the Majesty of Heaven a little one too? If I commit this Sin, I must offend and wrong a great God, Isa. xl. 15, 16, 17, 22.

2. Is there any little Hell to torment little Sinners? Are not the least Sinners there filled with the fulness of Wrath? O there is great Wrath treasured up for such as the World count little Sinners.

3. The less the Sin, the less the Inducement to commit it: What, shall I break with God for a Trifle? Destroy my Peace, wound my Conscience, grieve the Spirit, and all this for nothing? O what Madness is this?

Arg. 5. A fifth Argument is drawn from the Grace of God, and the Hopes of Pardon: Come, God will pass

pass by this as an Infirmary, he will not be extreamly mark it.

But stay, my Heart.

1. Where do I find a Promise of Mercy to presumptuous Sinners? Indeed for involuntary Surprisals, un-avoided and lamented Infirmities, there is a Pardon Course; but where is the Promise to a daring Sinner that sins upon a presumption of Pardon? Pause awhile my Soul upon that Scripture, Numb. xv. 27, 30. And if a Soul Sin through Ignorance, then he shall bring the Goat of the first Year for a Sin Offering, &c. But the Soul that doeth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that Soul be cut off from among his People.

2. If God be a God of so much Mercy, How can abuse so good a God? Shall I take so glorious an Attribute as the Mercy of God is, and abuse it unto Sin? Shall I wrong him because he is good? Or should not rather the Goodness of God lead me to Repentance Rom. ii. 4. There is Mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared, Psal. cxxx. 4.

Arg. 6. Lastly, sometimes Satan encourages to sin from the Examples of good and holy Men, thus and thus they have sinned, and been restored; therefore this may consist with Grace, and thou be saved nevertheless. The Danger of this Temptation is avoided, and the Heart secured, by retorting the Argument these three Ways.

1. Though good Men may commit the same Sin materially, which I am tempted to, yet did ever any good Men venture to Sin upon such a Ground and Encouragement as this?

2. Did God record these Examples for my Imitation, or for my Warning? Are they not set up as Sea-

Marks

arks, that I might avoid the Rocks upon which they
1 Cor. xii. 6. Now these were our Examples, to
Intent we should not lust after evil Things, as they
lusted.

9. Am I willing to feel what they felt for Sin? O! I
do not follow them in the Ways of Sin? quia me
stigia terrent, lest God should plunge me into the
deeps of Horror, into which he cast them.

Thus learn to keep your Hearts in the Hour of
temptation to Sin.

10. Season. "The tenth special Season, to keep the
Heart with all Diligence, in the Time of spiritual
Darkness and Doubting when it is with the Soul, as
it was with Paul in his dangerous Voyage, neither
Sun, nor Moon, nor Star appears for many Days;
when by Reason of the Hidings of God's Face, the
Prevalency of Corruption, and the In-evidence of
Grace, the Soul is even ready to give up all its Hopes
and Comforts for lost; to draw sad and desperate
Conclusions upon itself; to call its former Comforts,
vain Delusions: its Grace, Hypocrisy. When the
serene and clear Heavens are overcast with dark
Clouds, yea filled with Thunders and horrible Tem-
pests; when the poor pensive Soul sits down and
weeps forth this sad Lamentation, My hope is pe-
rished from the Lord! Now to keep the Heart from
sinking in such a Day as this, to enable it to main-
tain its own Sincerity, is a Matter of great Diffi-
culty. The tenth Case then will be this.

Case 10. How the People of God in dark and
doubting Seasons, may keep their Hearts from enter-
taining such sad Conclusions about their Estates, as
destroy their Peace, and unfit them for their Duty.

There

There are two general Heads, to which the ground of doubting our Sincerity may be reduced. (1.) Ground of Carriage toward the Soul, either in the Time of extraordinary Affliction, or of some long and sad Infirmitie. Or, (2.) The Soul's Carriage toward God. And here it usually argues against the Truth of its Graces, either (1.) From its Relapses into the same Sins from which it hath formerly risen, with Shame and Sorrow. Or (2.) From the sensible Declining of its Affections from God. Or (3.) From the Excess of the Affections towards Creature-comforts and Enjoyments. Or (4) From its Enlargements in public, often Straitenings in private Duties. Or (5.) From some horrid Injections of Satan, with which the Soul is greatly perplexed. Or, Lastly, From God's Silence and seeming Denial of its long depending Suits and Prayers.

These are the common Grounds of those Conclusions: Now in Order to the Establishment and Support of the Heart in this Condition, it will be necessary,

1. That you be acquainted with some general Truths which have a Tendency to the Settlement of a trembling and doubting Soul.
2. That you be rightly instructed about the forementioned Particulars, which are the Grounds of your Doubting.

The general Truths requisite for poor doubting Souls to be acquainted with, are these.

1. That every Working and Appearance of Hypocrisy, doth not presently prove the Person in whom it is to be an Hypocrite. You must carefully distinguish between the Presence and the Predominency of Hypocrisy.

crisy: There are Remains of Deceitfulness in the
Hearts; David and Peter had sad Experience of
yet the standing Frame and general Bent of the
Heart being upright, it did not denominate them Hy-
pocrites.

2. That we ought as well to hear what can be said
for us, as against us: It is the Sign of upright Hearts
sometimes to use an over-rigid and merciless Severity
against themselves; they do not indifferently consi-
der the Case of their own Souls; it is in this Case as
Solomon speaks in another, Prov. xiii. 7. There is
that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing; and
there is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great
riches. 'Tis the damning Sin of the self-flattering
Hypocrite, to make his Condition better than it is;
and it is the Sin and Folly of some upright ones, to
make their Condition worse than indeed it is. Why
would you be such Enemies to your own Peace? To
read over the Evidences of God's Love to your Souls,
as a Man doth a Book which he intends to confute?
Why do you study to find Evasions, to turn off those
Comforts which are due to you? 'Tis said of Joseph,
that he was minded to put away his espoused Mary, not
knowing that that holy Thing which was conceived
in her, was by the Holy Ghost; and this may be your
Case. A third Truth is this.

3. That many a Saint hath charged and condemned
himself for that which God will never charge him
with, nor condemn him for. Why hast thou burdened
your Hearts from thy Fear, (saith the Church) Isa. lxiii.
7. and yet the Verse before manifests, that their Hearts
were not so hardened. Godly Bradford wrote himself an
Hypocrite, a painted Sepulchre; yet doubtless God
acquitted him of that Charge.

G

4. Every

4. Every Thing which is a Ground of Grief to the People of God, is not a sufficient Ground of Questioning their Sincerity. There are many more Things that trouble you, than there are to stumble you; if upon every slip and failing through Infirmary, you should question all that ever was wrought upon you, your Life must be made up of Doubtings and Fears, you can never attain a settled Peace, nor live that Life of Praise and Thankfulness the Gospel calls for.

5. The Soul is not at all Times fit to pass Judgment upon its own Condition. To be sure, in the day of Desertion, when the Soul is benighted, and in the stormy Day of Temptation, when the Soul is in a Hurry; 'tis utterly unfit to judge its Estate; examine your Hearts upon your Beds, and be still, Psal. 121. This is rather a Season for watching and resisting, than for judging and determining.

6. That every Breach of Peace with God, is not a Breach of Covenant with God. The Wife hath many Weaknesses and Failings, often grieves and displeases her Husband, yet in the Main is faithful and true, loves him; these Failings may cause him to alter his Carriage, but not to withdraw his Love, or deny his Relation. Return, O backsliding Israel, for I am married unto you.

7. Lastly, Whatever our Sin or Trouble be, should rather drive us to God than from God. Pardon my Sin, for it is great, Psal. xxv. 11. Suppose it be true, that thou hast so and so sinned, that thou art thus long and sadly deserted; yet 'tis a false Inference that therefore thou shouldest be discouraged, as if there were no help for thee in thy God. When you have well digested these seven established Truths, if still

Do

doubt remain, then consider, what may be replied to the particular Ground of those Doubts. As,

1. You doubt, and are ready to conclude, the Lord hath no Regard or Love for your Souls, because of some extraordinary Affliction which is come upon you. But I would not have thy Soul so to conclude, till thou be able satisfactorily to Answer these three Questions.

1. Quest. If great Troubles and Afflictions be marks of God's Hatred, why should not Impunity and constant Prosperity be tokens of his Love? For contrarium contraria est ratio & consequentia: of contrary things there is a contrary Reason and Consequence. Is it this so indeed? Or saith not the Scripture quite otherwise? Prov. 1. 32. The Prosperity of Fools destroys them. So Psal. lxxiii. 5.

2. Quest. Dare I draw the same Conclusion upon others, that have been as much, yea more afflicted than myself? If this Argument conclude against thee, then so it doth against every one in thy Condition; yea, the greater the Affliction of any Child of God hath been, the more strongly the Argument still concludes, and then woe to David, Job, Haman, Paul, and all that have been afflicted as they were.

3. Quest. Had God exempted you only from these troubles, which all other his People feel; would not that have been a greater Ground of Doubting to you than this? Especially since the Scripture saith, Heb. i. 8. If you be without Chastenings, whereof all are partakers, then are ye Bastards, and not Sons.

O how is our Father put to it by froward Children? If he afflicts, then one cries he loves me not; If he exempt from Affliction, others question his Love upon that

Ground. Surely you have other Work to do under the Rod than this.

2. Or do you rashly infer, the Lord hath no Love for you, because he hides his Face from you, that your Condition is miserable, because dark and uncomfortable; before you draw such rash Conclusions, what answer you can give to these four following Queries.

1. *Quer.* If any Action of God towards his People will bear a favourable, as well as an harsh and severe Construction, why should not his People interpret it in the best Sense? And is not this such? May he not have a Design of Love, as well as of Hatred, in this Dispensation? May he not depart for a Season, and not for ever, yea, that he might not depart for ever? You are not the first that have mistaken God's Ends in Desertion, Isa. xlix. 14. Sion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me: Was it so indeed? Nothing less, ver. 15. Can a Mother forget her child? &c.

2. *Quer.* Do you find the Marks of an absolute and final Desertion upon your own Spirits, that you are so apt to conclude yours to be such? Do you find your Heart inclined to forsake God? Have you lost your conscientious Tenderneſs in Point of Sin? If sad Characters appear upon you indeed; but if in the dark Hour you are as tender of Sin as ever, as much resolved to cleave to God as ever, I cannot, I will not forsake God, let him do what he will with me; but I cannot. If your Hearts work thus, it can be but a partial, limited, and temporary Desertion; by this he still keeps his Interest in your Hearts, a sure Sign he will return and visit you again.

3. *Quer.*

3. *Quer.* Is Sense and Feeling a competent Judge of God's Action and Designs? or may a Man safely rely upon its Testimony, after so many Discoveries of the Fallability of it? Is this a sound Argument? If God had any Love for my Soul, if it were not quite gone, I should feel it now as well as in former Times; but I cannot feel it, therefore it is quite gone. Do not you know the Sun still keeps on his Course in the Heavens, even in full and close Weather, when you cannot see it? And may it not be so with the Love of God? Read Isa. l. 10. May not I as well conclude in Winter when the Flowers have hid their beautiful Heads under ground, they are quite dead and gone, because I cannot find them in December, where I saw them in May?

4. *Quer.* Think you the Lord cares not to break his Children's Hearts, and his own Promise too? Hath he no more Regard to either? If he return no more, these must be the Consequents, Isa. lvii. 16, 17. Heb. xii. 5.

When then, from God's Carriage towards you, either Affliction or Desertion, no such discouraging, Heart-breaking Conclusions can be inferred. Next let us see whether they may not be inferred from our Carriage towards God; and here the principal Grounds of doubting are such as these.

1. I have fallen again into the same Sin from which I have formerly risen with Repentance and Resolution, therefore my sinning is customary sinning, a Spot that is not the Spot of God's Children: Hence the upright Soul trembles; upon this 'tis ready to affirm, that all its former Humiliations for, and Oppositions unto Sin, were but Acts of Hypocrisy. But stay poor trembling Heart.

1. Quer. If this be so, how comes it to pass, that Christ put such a favourable Construction upon the Disciples sleeping the third Time, when he had as often reproved them for it! Mat. xxvi. 40, 41. And here is it that we find in Scripture so many Promises made not only to the first Sins, but also to the Backsliding of God's People, Jer. iii. 22. Hos. xiv. 4.

2. Quer. Is not your Repentance and Care renewed, as often as your Guilt is renewed! Yea, the more you sin, the more you are troubled; it is not for

customary Sinning, the rise whereof
Lib. de Consc. Bernard excellently discovers. 1. (Salm. p. 1. 109. he) when a Man accustomed to good

finneth grievously, it seems importable yea, he seems alive to descend alive into Hell. 2. In the process of time it seems not importable, but heavy and betwixt importable and heavy there is no firm descent. 3. Next it becomes light, his Conscience smites it but faintly, and he feels not the Stripes of it. 4. Then there is not only a total Insensibleness of it, but that which was bitter and displeasing, is now become sweet and pleasing in some Degree. 5. Then 'tis turned into Custom, and not only pleases, but delights. Lastly, Custom is turned into Nature, cannot be pulled away from it, but defends and pleads for it: This is customary Sinning, this is the way of the Wicked, but the quite contrary is our Condition.

3. Query. Are you sure from Scripture Ground that a good Man may not relapse again and again into the same Sin? 'Tis true, as for gross Sins, they do not use to relapse into them. David committed Adultery no more; Paul persecuted the Church no more; Peter denied Christ no more; but I speak of ordinary infirmities: Job's Friends were good Men, yet (saith

Chap. xix. 3. These ten times have ye reproached
So then no such Conclusions follow from this
Ground of doubting.

2. The second Ground is the declining and wither-
ing of our Affections to spiritual Things. O! (saith
the upright Soul) if ever I had been planted a right
Tree, I should have been as a green Olive-Tree in the
house of my God; but my Branches wither, therefore
my Root is naught. But stay.

1. Query. May you not be mistaken about the
decays of Grace, and fading of your Affections?
What if they be not so quick and ravishing as at first?
May not that be recompenced in the Spirituality and
solidity of them now? 1 Phil. ix. I pray God your
love may abound more and more in all Judgment; it
may be more solid, though not so fervorous. Or do
you not mistake, by looking forward to what you
should be, rather than backward to what once you
were? 'Tis a good Note of Ames: We discern the
growth of Grace, as the growth of Plants, which we
perceive rather *Crevisse quam Crescere*, to have grown
than to grow.

2. Quer. But grant it be so indeed as you affirm,
must it needs follow, that the Root of the Matter is not
in you? David's last ways are distinguished from his
first, 2 Chron. xvii. 3. And yet both first and last, a
holy Man. The Church of Ephesus is charged by
Christ for leaving her first Love, and yet a Golden
candlestick, many precious Saints in that Church,
Rev. ii. 2, 3, 4.

3. A third Ground of these sad Conclusions, is, The
excess of our Affections to some Creature Enjoyments.
I fear I love the Creature more than God; and if so,
my Love is but Hypocritical. I sometimes feel

stronger, and more sensible Motions of my Heart some Earthly Comforts, than I do to Heavenly Objects; Therefore my Soul is not upright in me. Stay Soul.

1. *Quer.* May not a Man love God more solidly and strongly than the Creature, and yet his Affections to the Creatures be sometimes moved more violently and sensibly than toward God? As rooted Malice argues stronger Hatred, than a sudden, though more violent Passion, so we must measure our Love not by a violent Motion of it, now and then, but by the Depth of its Root, and constancy of its Actings; because David was so passionately moved for Absalom, Joab concluded That if he had lived, and all the People died, it would have pleased him well, 2 Sam. xix. 7. But that was argued more like a Soldier than a Logician.

2. *Quer.* If you indeed love the Creature for itself, if you make it your End, and Religion but a Means, then the Conclusion is rightly drawn upon you. But if you love the Creature in Reference to God, and nothing in it separated from him, though sometimes your Affections offend in the Excess; this is consistent with sincere Love to God. To love the Creature inordinately, (i. e.) To put it in God's Room, and make it a Man's End; this is the Love of a carnal Heart, to love it immoderately, that is, to let out more Affection to it than we ought, is sometimes the Sin of the fleshly Hearts.

3. *Quer.* Have not many Souls feared as you say, that when Christ and Creatures should stand as Competitors in some eminent Trial, they should forsake Christ rather than the Creature; and yet when brought to that Dilemma, have been able to cast all the World at their Heels for Christ? Many of the Martyrs

uch Fears, and thus they were satisfied: The Prevalency of Love is best seen at Parting; there may be more Love to Christ in thy Soul than thou art now aware of; and if God bring thee to such a pinch, thou mayest see it.

4. A fourth Ground of these sad Conclusions is from hence, That we find our Hearts sometimes more straitened in private, than in publick Duties. O if my Soul were sincere, its actings in Duty would be uniform, I am but a Pharisee upon this Ground; 'tis sad indeed we should at any Time find our Hearts straitened in private. But,

4. Quer. Do not all their Enlargements in Duty, whether publick, or private, depend upon the Spirit, who is the Lord of Influences, and according as he gives out, or hold back those Influences, so art thou enlarged or straitened? And what if sometimes he please give that in a publick, which he with-holds in a private Duty, as long as thy Soul is satisfied in neither, without Communion with God, and the Straitness of the heart is indeed its Burden; Doth that argue to be an hypocrite?

2. Quer. Dost thou not make Conscience of private duties, and set thyself before the Lord in them? Indeed if thou live in the constant Neglect, or careless performance of them, if thou art curious about publick, and careless about private Duties, that would be a sad sign: But when you have conscientiously performed, and often met with God in them, it will not follow you are insincere because that Communion is sometimes interrupted. Besides,

3. Quer. May there not be something at some times in a publick, which is wanting in a private Duty, to life and advantage thine Affections. God may sometimes

times make use of the melting Affections of the with whom thou hearest or prayest, as petty Instruments to move thy Affections; this Advantage is wanting in private. Therefore from hence (the Case standing) no such Inference can be drawn.

5. Another Ground is from those horrid Injections Satan, with which the Soul is greatly perplexed; these I may see what an Heart I have: Grace be where these are?

Yes, Grace may be where such Thoughts are, not where they are lodg'd and consented to; Dost thou cry out under the Burthen; enter thy Protest in Heaven against them; strive to keep up holy and reverent Thoughts of God? then 'tis a Rape not a voluntary Prostitution.

6. The last Ground of the sad Conclusions, is the Lord's long Silence, and seeming Denial of our depending Suits and Prayers. O if God had any regard to my Soul, he would have heard my Cries before now! But I have no Answer from him, therefore no Interest in him. But stay, doubting Soul:

1. *Quer.* Have not many Saints stumbled at the Stone before thee? Psal. xxxi. 32. I said in my heart I am cut off from before thine Eyes, nevertheless thou heardest the Voice of my Supplication. So the Church Lam. iii. 44. Thou coverest thyself with a Cloud, our Prayers should not pass through. Jonah ii. 4. Thou saidst I, I am cast out of thy Sight: and may not you be mistaken in this Matter as well as they?

2. *Quer.* Though God's abhorring, and rejecting Prayer be an Argument of his abhorring the Person that prays, yet dare we conclude so from a mere Suspension of the Answer? God may bear long with

Elect, that cry unto him Day and Night, Luke
iii. 7.

3. Quer. Can you deny but that there are some
things appearing in your Souls, even whilst God suf-
fers his Answer, that argue your Prayers are not re-
ceived by him? As (1.) Though no Answer come, yet
you are still resolved to wait; you dare not say as that pro-
fane Wretch did, 2 Kings vi. iii. 'This Evil is of the
Lord, why should I wait for him any longer?' (2.) You
clear and justify God still, and lay the Reason and
Cause of his Silence upon yourselves. So did David,
Psalm xxii. 2, 3. O my God I cry in the Day-time and
you hearest not; and in the Night, and am not silent,
because thou art holy, &c. (3.) The Suspension of God's
Answer makes you inquisitive into your own Hearts,
that Evils are there that obstruct your Prayers? So the
Church, Lam. iii. 8. He shutteth out my Prayer: And
how doth he this Work? You may see, ver. 40. Let
us search and try our Ways; Well then, neither from
hence may you conclude that God hath no Love for
our Souls.

And thus I have shewn you how to keep your Hearts
in a dark and doubting Season from those desperate
Conclusions of Unbelief. God forbid any false Heart
should encourage itself from these Things;
our Unhappiness, that when we give Saints *Caution.*
and Sinners their proper Portions, that each of
us are so prone to take up the others Part.

11. Season. "The eleventh special Season calling
for this Diligence to keep our Hearts, is, when suf-
ferings for Religion come to an Height, then look to
your Hearts, Mat. xxiv. 8, 9, 10. All these are the
beginning of Sorrows, and they shall deliver you up
to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be
" hated

" hated of all Nations for my Name's sake, and
 " THEN shall many be offended. When Sufferings
 " for Religion grow hot, then blessed is he that is
 " offended in Christ; Troubles are then at an Height
 " (1.) When a Man's nearest Friends and Relations
 " forsake and leave him, Micah vii. 5, 6. 2 Tim. 4. 16. When
 " a Man is engaged alone. (2.) When it comes
 " resisting to Blood, Heb. xii. 4. (3.) When Temptations
 " are presented to us in our Sufferings, Heb.
 " 37. (4.) When eminent Persons for Profession turn
 " aside, and desert the Cause of Christ, 2 Tim. ii.
 " (5.) When God hides his Face in a suffering Holy
 " Jer. xvii. 17. (6.) When Satan falls upon us with
 " strong Temptations, to question the Grounds of
 " Sufferings, or the Soul's Interest in Christ: Now
 " hard to keep the Heart from turning back, and
 " Steps from declining God's Ways." The Eleventh
 Question then shall be this.

II. Case. How the Heart may be kept from
 lapsing under the greatest Sufferings for Religion?
 the bitterness of Sufferings at any time cause the Soul
 to distaste the Ways of God, and take up Thoughts
 forsaking it, stay thine Heart under that Temptation
 by propounding these Eight Questions following to

1. Quest. What Reproach and Dishonour shall
 pour upon Christ and Religion, by deserting him
 such a Time as this? This will proclaim to all the
 World, that how much soever I have boasted of
 Promises, yet when it comes to the Trial, I dare hazard
 nothing upon the Credit of them: And how will it
 open the Mouths of Christ's Enemies to blaspheme me?
 better I had never been born, than that worthy Name
 should be blasphemed through me! Shall I forsake
 the Triumphs of the Uncircumcised? Shall I make

Birth in Hell? O if I did but value the Name of Christ as much as many a wicked Man values his own Name, I would never endure to see it exposed to such Contempt! Will proud Dust and Ashes venture Death, yea, Hell, rather than a Blot upon their Name? And shall I venture nothing to save the Honour and Reputation of Christ?

2. Quest. Dare I violate my Conscience to save my self? Who shall comfort me when Conscience wounds me! What Comfort is there in Life, Liberty, or Friends, when Peace is taken away from the inner Man? When Constantius threatened to cut off Samonius his right Hand, if he would not subscribe somewhat that was against his Conscience, he held up both Hands to the Messenger that was sent, saying, He will cut off both rather than I will do it: Farewel all Peace, Joy and Comfort, from that Day forward: Had Amri Peace that slew his Master? said Jezebel: So I here, had Judas Peace? Had Spira Peace? And will you have Peace if you tread in their Steps? O consider what you do!

3. Quest. Is not the publick Interest of Christ and Religion, infinitely more than any private Interest of my own? 'Tis a famous Passage that of Terentius, Captain to Adrian the Emperor; he presented a Petition to Adrian, That the Christians might have a Temple by themselves to worship God apart from the Jews: The Emperor tore his Petition and threw it away, bidding him to ask somewhat for himself, and it should be granted; but he modestly gathered up the pieces of his Petition again, and told him, If he could be heard in God's Cause, he would never ask any thing for himself. Yea, even Tully, though an Heathen, could say, *Ne Immortalitatem quidem contra rem pub-*

publicam; He would not accept even of Immortality itself against the Common-wealth. O! if we had more publick, we should not have such cowardly Spirits!

Quest. 4. Did Jesus Christ serve me so? when for my Sake he exposed himself to far greater Sufferings than can be before me? His Sufferings were great indeed, he suffered from all Hands, in all his Offices, every Member, not only in his Body, but in his Soul yea, the Sufferings of his Soul, were the very Soul his Sufferings, witness the Bloody Sweat in the Garde witness that Heart-melting and Heaven rendring O cry upon the Cross, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And yet he flinched not, he endured the Cross, despising the Shame. Alas! what are my Sufferings compared with Christ's? He hath drunk up the Vinegar and Gall that would make my Sufferings bitter. When one of the Martyr's was asked, why he was so merry at his Death; Oh said he! It is because the Soul of Christ was so heavy at his Death. Did Christ bear such a Burden for me, with unbroken Patience and Constancy? And I shrink back for momentary and slight Afflictions for him?

5. Quest. Is not eternal Life worth the Suffering a Moment's Pain? If I suffer with him, I shall rest with him. O how will Men venture Life and Limb for a fading Crown, swim through Seas of Blood to the Throne? And will I venture nothing? Suffer nothing for the Crown of Glory that fadeth not away? My Lord will follow my Horse's Heels from Morning to Night, take many a weary Step through Mire and Dirt, rather than leave me, though at Night all he gets by it is Bones and Blows. If my Soul had any true Greatness, any Sparks of Generosity in it, how would it despise the Sufferings of the Way, for the Glory of the End?

How would it break down all Difficulties before it, whilst by an Eye of Faith it sees the Forerunner who already entered, standing as it were upon the Walls of Heaven, with the Crown in his Hand, saying, He that overcometh shall inherit all Things? Come on then, my Soul, come on, there is Eternal Life laid up for them that by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, Honour and Immortality, Rom. ii. 7.

6. *Quest.* Can I so easily cast off the Society and company of the Saints, and give the right Hand of Fellowship to the Wicked? How can I part with such lovely Companions as these have been? How often have I been benefited by their Counsels? Ezra x. 3. How often refreshed, warmed, and quickened by their company? Eccles. iv. 10, 11. How often have I fasted and prayed with them? What sweet Counsel have I taken with them, and gone to the House of God in company? And shall I now shake Hands with them, and say, Farewell all ye Saints for ever, I shall never see among you more; come Drunkards, Swearers, Blasphemers, Persecutors, you shall be my everlasting companions? O rather let my Body and Soul be rent under, than that ever I should say thus to the excellent of the Earth, in whom is all my Delight.

Quest. 7. Have I seriously considered the terrible Scripture-Comminations against Backsliders? O my heart! Darest thou turn back upon the very Points of each Threatenings as these? Jer. xvii. 5, 6. Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the Man that trusteth in Man, and maketh Flesh his Arm; and whose Heart departeth from the Lord, for he shall be like the Heath in the desert, and shall not see when Good cometh; (i. e.) the Curse of God shall wither his Root and Branch. And Heb. xiv. 26, 27. If we sin wilfully after we have

have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there maineth no more Sacrifice for Sins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgement, and fiery Indignation which shall devour the Adversaries. And again, v. 38. If any Man draw back, my Soul shall have Pleasure in him; As if he should say, Take him Work take him Devil for your own, I have no Delight in him. O who dare draw back, when God hath hedged up the Way with such terrible Threats as these!

Quest. 8. Can I look Christ in the Face at the Day of Judgment, if I desert him now.

He that is ashamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels, Mark viii. 38. Yield a little while, and you shall see the Sign of the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory; the last Trump shall sound, the Dead both Small and Great, even all that sleep in the Dust shall awake and come before that great white Throne on which Christ shall sit in that Day. And now I can but imagine thou sawest the trembling Knees, and quivering Lips of guilty Sinners; imagine thou heardst the dreadful Sentence of the Judge upon them, Go ye cursed, &c. And then a Cry, the weeping, wailing and wringing of Hands that there shall be: Wouldst thou desert Christ now, to protract a poor, miserable Life on Earth? If the Word of God be true, if the Sayings of Christ be sealed and faithful, this shall be the Portion of the Apostate. 'Tis an easy Thing to stop the Mouth of Conscience now, but will it be easy to stop the Mouth of the Judge then? Thus keep thy Heart, that it depart not from the living God.

Season 12. The Twelfth Season of looking diligently to our Hearts, and keeping them with greatest care, is the time of Sickneſs: "When a Child of God draws nigh to Eternity, when there are but a few Sands more in the upper part of the Glaſs to run down: Now Satan buſily beſtirs himſelf; of him it may be ſaid, as of the natural Serpent, *Nunquam niſi moriens producitur in longum*; he is never ſeen at his full length till dying: And now his great Deſign, ſince he cannot win the Soul from God, is to diſcourage, and make it unwilling to go to God; though the gracious Soul, with Jacob, ſhould then rouse up itſelf upon a dying Bed, and rejoice that the Marriage-Day of the Lamb is now almoſt come; though it ſhould then ſay with dying Auſtin, *Vivere renuo ut Chriſto vivam*; I deſpise Life to be with Chriſt. Or as dying Millius, when one asked him whether he were willing to die; O ſaid he, *Illius eſt nolle mori qui nollit ire ad Chriſtum*, let him be unwilling to die, who is unwilling to go to Chriſt. But O! What ſhrinking from Death? What Loathneſs to depart may ſometimes (indeed too frequently) be obſerved in the People of God? How loath are ſome of them to take Death by the cold Hand? If ſuch a Liberty were indulged to us, not to be diſſolved, till we diſſolve ourſelves; when ſhould we ſay with St. Paul, I deſire to be diſſolved?" Well then, the laſt Caſe ſhall be this.

Caſe 12. How the People of God, in Times of Sickneſs, may get their Hearts looſe from all Earthly Engagements, and perſwade them into a Willingneſs to die. And there are Seven Arguments which I ſhall urge on the People of God, at ſuch a Time as this, to make them chearfully entertain the Meſſengers of
H Death,

Death, and die as well as live like Saints: And the First is this.

1. Arg. First the Harmlessness of Death to the People of God. Though it keeps its Dart, it hath lost its Sting; a Saint (to allude to that, Isa. xi. 8) may play upon the Hole of this Asp, and put his Hand into the Cockatrice's Den. Death is the Cockatrice, or Asp; the Grave is his Hole or Den; a Saint need not fear to put his Hand boldly into it: It hath lost and lost its Sting in the Sides of Christ, 1 Cor. x. 55. O Death! where is thy Sting? Why art thou afraid, O Saint! that this Sickness may be thy Death as long as thou knowest that the death of Christ is the death of Death; indeed, if thou dost die in thy Sins, John viii. 21. If Death, as a King, did reign over thee, Rom. v. 14. If it could feed upon thee, as the Lion doth upon the Prey he hath taken; as Psal. xl. 14. Heli followed the pale Horse, as it is, Rev. vi. 8. thou mightest well startle and shrink back from it, but when God hath put away thy Sins from thee, as far as the East is from the West, Psal. ciii. 12. As long as there is no other Evil left in Death, for thee to encounter with, but bodily Pain; as long as the Scriptures represent it to thee under such harmless and easy Notions, as the putting off thy Cloaths, 2 Cor. v. And lying down to sleep upon thy Bed, Isa. lvii. Why shouldest thou be afraid: There is as much Difference betwixt Death to the People of God, and other as betwixt the Unicorn's Horn, when it is upon the Head of that fierce Beast, and when it is in the Apothecaries Shop, where it is made Salubrious and Medicinal.

3. Arg. Thy Heart may be kept from shrinking back at such a time as this, by considering the necessity

cessity of Death, in order to the full Fruition of God.

Whether thou art willing to die or no, I assure thee there is no other way to obtain the full Satisfaction of thy Soul, and compleat its Happiness, 'till the Hand of Death do thee the kind Office to draw aside the Curtain of Flesh, thy Soul cannot see God: This Animal Life stands betwixt him and thee: 2 Cor. 5. 6. Whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord. Thy Body must be refined and cast into a New Mould, else that new Wine of Heavenly Glory would break it. Paul, in his highest Rapture, 2 Cor. xii. 14. When he heard Things unutterable, was then but a Stander-by, a looker on; not admitted into the Company as one of them; but as the Angels are in our Assemblies, so was Paul in that Glorious Assembly above, and no otherwise; and yet even for this he must as it were be taken out of the Body, unclothed for a little Time, to have a Glimpse of that Glory, and then put on his Cloaths again. O then! Who would not be willing to die for a full Sight and Enjoyment of God? Methinks thy Soul should look and sigh like a Prisoner through the Grates of this Mortality; O that I had Wings like a Dove, then would I fly away, and be at rest: Most Men need Patience to die, but a Saint that understands what Death admits him to, should rather need Patience to live; methinks he should often look out, and listen on a Death-Bed for his Lord's Coming; and when he receives the News of his approaching Change, should say, The Voice of my Beloved, he cometh leaping over the Mountains, skipping over the Hills, Cant. ii. 8.

Arg. 3. Another Argument perswading to this Willingness, is the immediate Succession of a more excellent and glorious Life.

'Tis but wink, and you shall see God; your Happiness shall not be deferred till the Resurrection; but as soon as the Body is dead, the gracious Soul is swallowed up in Life, Rom. viii. 10, 11. When once you have loosed from this Shore, in a few Moments your Souls will be wafted over upon the Wings of Angels to the other Shore of a glorious Eternity, Phil. i. 23. I desire to be dissolved, and be with Christ: Did the Soul and Body die together, as Berillus taught; or did they sleep till the Resurrection, as others have groundlessly fancied, it had been a Madness for Paul to desire a Dissolution for the Enjoyment of Christ: For if this were so, he enjoyed more of Christ whilst his Soul dwelt in its fleshly Tabernacle, than he should out of it.

There are but two ways of the Souls living known in Scripture, viz. The Life of Faith, and the Life of Vision. 1 Cor. v. 5. those two divide all Time both present and future betwixt them, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. If when Faith fails, Sight should not immediately succeed, what should become of the unbodied Soul? But blessed be God, this great Heart-establishing Truth is evidently revealed in Scripture, Luke xxiii. 43. you have Christ's Promise John xiv. 3. I will come and receive you to myself. O what a Change will a few Moments make upon your Condition? Rouse up, dying Saint, when thy Soul is come out a little farther; when it shall stand like Abraham in its Tent Door, the Angels of God shall soon be with it: The Souls of the Elect are as it were put out to the Angels to nurse, and when they die, these Angels carry them home again to their Father's House: If an Angel were caused to fly swiftly to bring a Saint the Answer of his Prayer, Dan. ix. 21. How much

more

more will the Angels come post from Heaven to receive and transfer the Praying Soul itself?

4. Arg. Farther; It may much conduce to thy Willingness to die, to consider, That by Death, God oft-times hides his People out of the way of all Temptations and Troubles upon Earth, Rev. xiv. 13. Write from henceforth, Blessed are the Dead that die in the Lord. 'Tis God's usual way, when some extraordinary Calamities are coming upon the World, to set his People out of Harms way before-hand; Isa. lvii. 1. Merciful Men are taken away from the evil to come. So Micha. vii. 1, 2. When such an evil time comes, as is there described, That they all lie in wait for Blood, and every Man hunts his Brother with a Net: Before that, God by an Act of Favour houses his People before-hand; dost thou know that Evil may be in the Earth, which thou art so loth to leave? Thy God removes thee for thy great Advantage; thou art disbanded by Death, and called off the Field: other poor Saints must stand to it, and endure a great fight of Afflictions.

'Tis observed, that Methusala died the very Year before the Flood, Augustin a little before the sacking of Hippo, Pareus just before the taking of Heydelbourgh: Luther observes, that all the Apostles died before the Destruction of Jerusalem, and Luther himself before the Wars breaking out in Germany. It may be the Lord sees thy tender Heart cannot endure to see the Misery, or bear the Temptations that are coming, and therefore will now gather thee to thy Grave in peace; and yet wilt thou cry, O spare me a little longer.

5. Arg. If yet thy Heart hang back, consider the great Advantage you will have by Death, above all that ever you enjoyed on Earth; and that (1.) As to

your Communion with God. (2.) As to your Communion with Saints.

1. For your Communion with God: The time of perfecting that is now come: Thy Soul shall shortly stand before the Face of God, and have the immediate Emanations and Beamings forth of his Glory upon it. Here thy Soul is remote from God, the Beams of his Glory strike it but obliquely and feebly, but shortly it will be under the Line, and there the Sun shall stand still as it did in Gibeon; there shall be no cloudings nor declinings of it; O how should this wrap thy Soul with Desires of being unclothed.

2. As for the Enjoyment of Saints, here indeed we have Fellowship with them of the lower Form; but that Fellowship is so dissweetened by remaining Corruptions, that there is no Satisfaction in it. As it is the greatest Plague that can befall an Hypocrite to live in a pure Church, so 'tis the greatest Vexation to the Spirit of a Saint to live in a corrupt and disordered Church; but when Death hath admitted you into that Glorious Assembly of the Spirits of just Men made perfect, you shall have the Desire of your Hearts. Here you cannot fully close one with another, yea, you cannot fully close with your own Souls; O what Discords, Jarrings, Censurings are here? What perfect blessed Harmony there? In Heaven each Saint loves another as himself, they are altogether lovely. O my Soul haste thee away from the Lions Dens, from the Mountains of Bether, from divided Saints, to those Mountains of Myrrh, and Hills of Frankincense; thou art now going unto thine own People, as the Apostle's Phrase imports, 2 Cor. v. 8.

6. Arg. If all this will not do, Consider what heavy Burthens Death will ease thy Shoulders of.

In this Tabernacle we groan, being burthened. (1.) With Bodily Distempers; how true do we find that of Theophrastus, The Soul pays a dear Rent for the Tenement it now lives in; but Glorified Bodies are clogged with no Indispositions. Death is the best Physician; it will cure thee of all Diseases at once. (2.) With the in-dwelling of Sin; this makes us groan from the very Bowels, Rom. vii. 24. But he that is dead is free from Sin, Rom. vi. 7. Hath Justification destroyed its Damning Power, and Sanctification its Reigning Power; so Glorification destroys its very Being and Existence. (3.) We groan under Temptations here, but as soon as we are out of the Body, we are out of the reach of Temptation: When once thou art got into Heaven, thou mayest say, Now Satan, I am there where thou canst not come; for as the Damned in Hell are malo obformati, so fixed in Sin and Misery, that their Condition cannot be altered; so Glorified Saints are bono confirmati, so fixed in Holiness and Glory, that they cannot be shaken. (4.) Here we groan under various Troubles and Afflictions, but then the Days of our Mourning are ended. God shall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes: O then let us haste away, that we may be at rest.

7. Arg. If still thou linger like Lot in Sodom, then hastily, Examine all the Pleas and Pretences for a longer time on Earth. Why art thou unwilling to die?

1. Object. Oh I have many Relations in the World, I know not what will become of them when I am gone.

Sol. 1. If thou art troubled about their Bodies and outward Condition, Why should not that Word satisfy thee, Jer. xlix. 1. Leave thy fatherless Children to me, I will keep them alive, and let thy Widows trust

in me. Luther in his last Will and Testament hath this Expression, Lord, thou hast given me Wife and Children, I have nothing to leave them, but I commend them unto thee. O Father of the Fatherless, and Judge of Widows, Nutri, Serva, Doce; nourish, keep and teach them: Or, art thou troubled for their Souls? Thou canst not convert them if thou should'st live, and God can make thy Prayer and Counsels to live, and take place upon them when thou art dead.

2. Object. I would fain live to do God more Service in the World.

Sol. Well, but if he have no more Service for thee to do here, why shouldest thou not say with David, I have no Delight to use me any farther, here am I; let him do what seemeth him good; in this World thou hast no more to do, but he is calling thee to an higher Service and Employment in Heaven; and what thou wouldest do for him here, he can do that by other hands.

3. Object. I am not yet fully ready, I am not as a Bride compleatly adorned for the Bridegroom.

Sol. Thy Justification is compleat already, though thy Sanctification be not so; and the way to make it so is to die; for till then, it will have its Defects and Wants.

4. Object. O but I want Assurance, if I had that I could die presently!

Sol. 1. Yea, there it sticks indeed; but than consider, That an hearty Willingness to leave all the World, to be freed from Sin, and be with God, is the next way to that desired Assurance; no carnal Person was ever willing to die upon this Ground.

And thus I have finished those Cases which so nearly concern the People of God, in the several Conditions of their Life, and taught them how to keep their Hearts in all. I shall next apply the whole.

I. *Use of Information.*

YOU have heard that the keeping of the Heart is the great Work of a Christian, in which the very Soul and Life of Religion consists, and without which all other Duties are of no value with God; hence then I shall infer, to the Consternation of Hypocrites, and formal Professors.

1. That the Pains and Labours which many Persons have taken in Religion, is but lost Labour, and Pains, to no Purpose, such as will never turn to account.

Many great Services have been performed, many Glorious Works are wrought by Men, which yet are utterly rejected by God, and shall never stand upon Record in order to an Eternal Acceptation, because they took no heed to keep their Hearts with God in those Duties: This is that fatal Rock upon which Thousands of vain Professors split themselves eternally; they are curious about the Externals of Religion, but regardless of their Hearts. O how many Hours have some Professors spent in hearing, praying, reading, conferring: And yet, as to the main End of Religion, is good they had sat still and done nothing: For all this signifies nothing this great Work, I mean Heart-work, being all the while neglected; tell me, thou vain Professor, when didst thou shed a Tear for the Deadness, Hardness, Unbelief, or earthliness of thy Heart? Think'st thou, such an easy Religion can save thee? If so, we may invert Christ's Words, and say, wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way, that leadeth to Life, and many there be that go in thereat:

Hear

Hear me, thou Self-deluding Hypocrite, thou that hast put off God with heartless Duties, thou that hast acted in Religion, as if thou hadst been blessing an Idol, thou couldst not search and discover thy Heart: Thou that hast offered to God but the Skin of the Sacrifice, not the Marrow, Fat, and Inwards of it; How wilt thou abide the coming of the Lord? How wilt thou hold up thy Head before him, when he shall say, O thou dissembling false-hearted Man? How couldst thou profess Religion? With what Face couldst thou so often tell me, Thou lovedst me, when thou knowest all the while in thine own Conscience, that thine Heart was not with me? O tremble to think, what a fearful Judgment it is to be given over to a heedless and careless Heart; and then to have Religious Duties, instead of a Rattle to quiet and still the Conscience!

2. Hence I also infer for the Humiliation even of upright Hearts, That unless the People of God spend more time and pains about their Hearts, than generally and ordinarily they do, they are never like to do God much Service, or be Owners of much Comfort in this World.

I may say of that Christian that is remiss and careless in keeping his Heart, as Jacob said of Reuben, Thou shalt not excel. It grieves me to see how many Christians there are, that go up and down dejected and complaining, that live at a poor low Rate both of Service and Comfort, and how can they expect it should be otherwise as long as they live at such a careless Rate? O how little of their time is spent in the Closet in searching, humbling, and quickening their Hearts!

You say, your Hearts are dead; and do you wonder they are so, as long as you keep them not with the Fountain of Life? If your Bodies have been dieted

you

our Souls have been, they would have been dead too; never expect better Hearts till you take more Pains with them; qui fugit molam fugit farinam, he that will not have the Sweat, must not expect the Sweet of Religion.

O Christians! I fear your Zeal and Strength hath been in the wrong Channel: I fear most of us may take to the Churches Complaint, Cant. i. 6. They have made me the Keeper of the Vineyards, but mine own Vineyard have I not kept. Two Things have eaten up the Time and Strength of the Professors of this Generation, and sadly diverted them from Heart-work.

1.) Fruitless Controversies started by Satan, I doubt not to this very Purpose, to take us off from practical godliness, to make us puzzle our Heads when we should be searching our Hearts. O how little have we minded that of the Apostle, Heb. xiii. 9. 'Tis a good Thing that the Heart be established with Grace, and not with Meats; (i. e.) with Disputes and Controversies about Meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

O how much better is it to see Men live exactly, than to hear them dispute subtly! these unfruitful Questions, How have they rended the Churches? wasted Time and Spirits, and called Christians off from their main Business, from looking to their own Vineyard? What think ye Sirs? Had it not been better the Questions ventilated among the People of God in late Days, had been such as these? How shall a Man discern the special from the common Operations of the Spirit? How may a Soul discern its first dealings from God? How may a backsliding Christian recover his first Love? How may the Heart be preserved from unseasonable Thoughts in Duty? How
may

may a Bosom Sin be discovered and mortified, & Would not this have tended more to the Credit of Religion, and comfort of your Souls? O 'tis time to repent and be ashamed of this Folly! When I read what Suarez, a Papist, said, who wrote many Tomes of Disputations, that he prized the Time he set apart for searching and examining of his Heart, in reference to God, above all the Time that ever he spent in other Studies? I am ashamed to find the Professors of this Age yet insensible of their Folly; Shall the Conscience of a Suarez feel a relenting Pang for Strength and Time so ill employed? And shall not yours? 'Tis it your Ministers long since warned you of; your Spiritual Nurses were afraid of the Rickets, when they saw your Heads only to grow, and your Hearts to wither. O when will God beat our Swords into Plow-Shares! I mean, our Disputes and Contentions into practical Godliness. (2.) Another Cause of neglecting our Hearts, hath been earthly Incumbrance: the Heads and Hearts of many have been filled with such a crowd and noise of worldly Business, that they have sadly and sensibly declined and withered in the Zeal, Love and Delight in God, in their heavenly serious and profitable way of conversing with Man.

O how hath this Wilderness intangled us! our Devotions and Conference; nay, our very Prayers and Duties have a tang of it: We have had so much work without Doors, that we have been able to do but little within. It was the

Mr. Strong. Complaint of an holy One, O faithless 'tis sad to think, how many precious Opportunities have lost, how many sweet Motions and Admonitions of the Spirit I have posted over unfruitfully, and made the Lord to speak in vain; in the secret Illapses

Spirit the Lord hath called upon me, but my worldly Thoughts did still lodge within me, and there is no Place in my Heart for such calls of God; surely there is a way of enjoying God, even in our worldly employments; God would never have put us upon them to our Loss: Enoch walked with God, and became his Sons and Daughters, Gen. v. 19. He walked with God, but did not retire and separate himself from the things of this Life; And the Angels that are employed by Christ in the Things of this World (for the Spirit of the living Creatures is in the Wheels) they are like Creatures, and cannot be in a two-fold Ubi at one time, yet they lose nothing of the beatifical Vision, at the time of their Administration; for Mat. xviii. 10. Let your Angels (even whilst they are employed for them) behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven. We need not lose our Visions by our Employments, if the Fault were not our own. Alas! that ever Christians, who stand at the Door of Eternity, and have more work upon their Hands, than this poor Moment of interposing Time is sufficient for, should yet be filling both our Heads and Hearts with Trifles.

3. Hence also I infer for the awakening of all, That the keeping of the Heart be the great Work of a Christian, that there are but few real Christians in the world.

Indeed, if every one that hath learned the Dialect of Christianity, and can talk like a Saint; if every one that hath Gifts and Parts, and by the common assisting Presence of the Spirit, can preach, pray, or discourse like a Christian: In a word, if such as associate themselves with the People of God, and delight in Ordinances, might pass for Christians, the number of them is great.

But

But alas! to what a small Number will they shrink if you Judge them by this Rule! How few are they that make Conscience of keeping their Hearts, watching their Thoughts, judging their Ends, &c. O there be but few Closet Men among Professors! 'tis far easier for Men to be reconciled to any Duties of Religion than to these; The prophane Part of the World do not so much as touch with the outside of Religious Duties, much less to this; and for the Hypocrite, though he be polite and curious about those Externals, yet you can never persuade him to this inward Work, this difficult Work; this Work, to which there is no Inducement by human Applause; this Work, that would quickly discover what the Hypocrite seems not to know; that by a general Consent, this Heart-work is left to the Hands of a few secret Ones; and I tremble to think in how few Hands it is.

II. *Use of Exhortation.*

IF the keeping of the Heart be so important a Business, if such choice Advantage accrue to you thereby, if so many dear and precious Interests be wrapped in it, then let me call upon the People of God everywhere to fall close to this Work.

O study your Hearts, watch your Hearts, keep your Hearts: Away with fruitless Controversies and idle Questions, away with empty Names and vain Shows, away with unprofitable Discourse and bold Censures of others; turn in upon yourselves, get into your Closets, and now resolve to dwell there. You have been Strangers to this Work too long, you have

cept others Vineyards too long, you have trifled about the Borders of Religion too long, this World hath detained you from your great Work too long; will you now resolve to look better to your Hearts? Will you hasten and come out of the crouds of Business, and clamours of the World, and retire yourselves more than you have done? O that this Day you would resolve upon it!

Reader, methinks I should prevail with thee, all that I beg for is but this, that thou shouldst step aside a little oftner to talk with God and thine own Heart; that thou shouldst not suffer every Trifle to divert thee, that thou shouldst keep a more true and faithful Account of thy Thoughts and Affections. That thou shouldst seriously demand of thine own Heart, at least every Evening, O my Heart, were hast thou been to Day? Whither hast thou made a Road to Day? If all that hath been said by way of Inducement be not enough, I have yet more Motives to offer you: And the first is this;

1. Motive. The studying, observing, and diligent keeping of your own Hearts, will marvellously help your Understanding in the deep Mysteries of Religion.

An honest well-experienced Heart, is a singular help to a weak Head, such a Heart will serve you instead of a commentary upon a great part of the Scriptures. By this Means you shall better understand the things of God, than the learned Rabbies, and profound Doctors, (if graceless and unexperienced) ever did; you shall not only have a more clear, but a more sweet perception and a gust of them. A man may discourse Orthodoxly and Profoundly, of the Nature and Effects of Faith, the Troubles and Comforts of Conscience, the Sweetness of Communication with God, that never felt the efficacy

efficacy and sweet Impressions of these things upon his own Spirit: But, O how dark and dry are these Nations, compared with his upon whose Heart they have been acted? When such a Man Reads David's Psalm or Paul's Epistles, there he finds his own Objections made and answered. O saith he, these holy Men speak my very Heart! Their Doubts were mine, their Troubles mine, and their Experience mine. I remember Chrysostome, speaking to his People of Antioch about some choice Experience, useth this Expression *Sciunt initiati quid dico*: Those that are initiated know what I say; Experience is the best School-Master. O then! study your Hearts, keep your Hearts.

2. Mot. The Study and Observation of your own Hearts will antidote you against the dangerous and infecting Errors of the Times and Places you live in.

For what think you is the Reason that so many Professors in England have departed from the Faith, giving heed to Fables; that so many Thousands have been led away by the Error of the wicked, that Jesuits and Quakers, who have sown corrupt Doctrine, have had such plentiful Harvests among us, but because they have met with a Company of empty Notional Professors that never knew what belongs to practical Godliness, and the Study of their own Hearts.

If Professors did but give Diligence to study, search and watch their own Hearts, they would have that Stedfastness of their own, that Peter speaks of, 2 Peter iii. 17. and this would ballast and settle them, Hebrews xiii. 9. Suppose a subtle Papist would talk so much of the Dignity and Merit of good Works, could he ever work the persuasion of it into that Heart that is conscious to itself of so much Darknes, Deadnes, Distraction, and Unbelief attending its best Duties? T

good Rule, *Non est disputandum de gustu.* There is no disputing against Taste. What a Man hath felt and tasted, one cannot beat him off from that by Argument.

3. Mot. Your Care and Diligence in keeping your Hearts will prove one of the best Evidences of your Sincerity.

I know no external Act of Religion that differences the sound from the unsound Professor: 'Tis wonderful to consider, how far Hypocrites go in all external Duties, how plausibly they can order the outward Man, hiding all their Indecencies from the Observation of the World.

But then, they take no heed to their Hearts; they are not in secret, what they appear to be in publick: and before this 'Trial no Hypocrite can stand; 'tis confess'd, they may in a fit, under a Pang upon a Death-Bed, cry out of the Wickedness of their Hearts; but alas! there is no heed to be taken to these extorted complaints in our Law, no Credit is to be given to the Testimony of one upon the Rack, because it may be supposed, that the Extremity of the Torture may make him say any Thing to be eased, but if Self-Jealousy, Care, and Watchfulness, be the daily workings and Games of thy Heart, it strongly argues the Sincerity of it: For what but the Sense of a Divine Eye? What but the real Hatred of Sin as Sin, could put thee upon those secret Duties, which lie out of the Observation of all Creatures.

If then it be a desirable Thing in thine Eyes, to have a fair Testimony of thine Integrity, and to know of a Truth that thou fearest God: Then study thine Heart, watch thy Heart, keep thy Heart.

I

4. Mot.

4. Mot. How fruitful, sweet and comfortable, would all Ordinances and Duties be to us, if our Hearts were better kept?

Oh what precious Communion have you with God every time you approach him: if your Hearts were but in frame! you might then say with David, Psal. civ. 34. My Meditation of him shall be sweet. That which loses all our Comforts in Ordinances and most secret Duties, is the indisposedness of the Heart; a Christian whose Heart is in a good Frame, gets the start of all others that come with him in that Duty. They are tugging hard to get up their Hearts to God now, trying this Argument upon them, and then, they go to quicken and affect them, and sometimes go away as bad as they came. Sometimes the Duty is almost ended before their Hearts begin to stir to feel a warmth, quickening, or power, from it; but all the while the prepared Heart is at its Work, this is he that ordinarily gets the first sight of Christ in a Sermon, the first Seal from Christ in a Sacrament, the first Kiss from Christ in secret Prayer. I tell you, and I tell you but what I have felt, that Prayers and Sermons would appear to you other manner of Things than they do, did you but bring better ordered Hearts unto them, you would not go away dejected and drooping. O this hath been a lost Day, a lost Duty to me: if you had not lost your Hearts, it might not be so; then the Comfort of Ordinances be sweet, look to your Hearts, keep your Hearts.

1. Mot. Acquaintance with your own Hearts would be a Fountain of matter to you in Prayer.

A Man that is diligent in Heart-work, and knows the state of his own Soul, will have a fountain-fullness of matter to supply him richly in all his Addresses to God.

God: His Tongue shall not faulter and make Pauses for want of Matter; Psalm 45. 1. My Heart is inditing a good Matter: Or as Montanus renders the Original, My Heart is boiling up good Matter, like a living Spring that is still bubbling up fresh Water; and then my Tongue is as the Pen of a ready Writer: Others must pump their Memories, rack their Inventions, and are often at a loss when they have done all; but if thou have kept and faithfully studied thine own Heart, 'twill be with the (as Job speaks in another case) like Bottles full of new Wine, that want vent, which are ready to burst; As holy matters flows plentifully, so more feelingly and sweetly from such a Heart; when a Heart-experienced Christian is mourning before God over some special Heart-corruption, wrestling with God for the supply of some special inward Want, he speaks not as other Men do, that have learned to pray by rote, their Confessions and Petitions are squeezed out, his drop freely, like pure Honey, from the Comb; 'tis a happiness then to be with, or near such a Christian. I remember Bernard having giving Rules to prepare the Heart for Prayer, concludes them thus, Et cum talis fueris memento mei; and (saith he) when thy Heart is in this frame, then remember me.

6. Mot. by this decayed Power of Religion will be recovered again among Professors, which is the most desirable Sight in this World.

O that I might live to see that Day; When Professors shall not walk in a vain shew, when they shall please themselves no more with a Name to live, being spiritually dead: When they shall be no more (as many of them now are) a Company of frothy, vain, and insincere Persons, but the Majestic Beams of Holiness shining

shining from their heavenly and serious Conversation shall awe the World, and command Reference from all that are about them; when they shall warm the Hearts of those that come nigh them, so that Men shall say, God is in these Men of a Truth.

Well, such a time may again be expected according to their Promise, Isaiah 60, 21. The People shall be all righteous. But till we fall closer to this great Work of keeping our Hearts, I am out of hopes to see those blessed Days; I cannot expect better Times, 'till God give better Hearts; Doth it not grieve you to see what a Scorn Religion is made in the World, what Objects of Contempt and Scorn the Professors of it are made in the World.

Professors, Would you recover your Credit? Would you again obtain an honourable Testimony in the Consciences of your very Enemies? Then, keep your Hearts, watch your Hearts. 'Tis the looseness, frothiness, and earthliness of your hearts, that hath made your lives so; and this hath brought you under Contempt of the World; you first lost your sights of God, and Communication with him, then your heavenly and serious Deportment among Men; and by that your Interest in their consciences: O then; For the Credit of Religion, for the Honour of your Profession, keep your hearts.

7. Mot. By diligence in keeping your Hearts, we should prevent, and remove the fatal scandals and stumbling-blocks out of the way of the World.

Woe to the World (saith Christ) because of offence Mat. 18. 7. Doth not shame cover your Faces? Doth not your Hearts bleed within you, to hear of the scandalous Miscarriages of many loose Professors? Could you not, like Sham and Japhat, go backward with your

Garmen

Garment to cover the shame of many Professors? How is that worthy Name blasphemed? Jam. 2, 7. 2. Sam. 2. 13, 14, the hearts of the Righteous sadness, Psalm 25. 3. Ezek. 36. 20. by this the World is fearfully prejudiced against Christ and Religion, the Bonds of Death made fast upon their Souls; those that had a general love and likeing to the ways of God, startled and quite driven back, and thus Soul-blood is shed: Woe to the World.

Yea, how are the Consciences of fallen Professors plunged, and even overwhelmed in the deeps of Trouble? God inwardly Excommunicating their Souls from all comfortable Fellowship with himself, and the Joys of his Salvation; infinite are the Mischiefs that come by the scandalous Lives of Professors.

And what is the true Cause and Reason of all this, but the neglecting of their Hearts? Were our hearts better kept, all this would be prevented: Had David kept his Heart he had not broken his Bones; a neglected careless Heart must of necessity produce a disorderly scandalous Life. I thank God for the

*Gospel-
Glas.*

Freedom and Faithfulness of a Reverend Brother, in shewing Professors their manifold Miscarriages; and from my Heart do wish, that when their wounds have been thoroughly Searched by that Probe, God would be pleased to heal them by this Plaister. O Professor! if ever you will keep Religion sweet, if ever you hope to recover the Credit of it in the World, keep your Hearts; either keep your hearts, or lose your Credit; keep your hearts, or lose your Comfort; keep your hearts, lest ye shed Soul-blood: What words can express the deep Concernments, the wonderful Consequences of this Work! every thing put a Necessity, a Solemnity, a Beauty upon it.

8. Mot. An Heart well kept will fit you for any condition God casts you into, or any service he hath to use you in.

He that hath learnt how to keep his Heart lowly, is fit for Prosperity : And he that knows how to use and apply it to Scripture Promises, and Supports, is fit to pass through any adversity ; he that can deny the Pride and Selfishness of his Heart, is fit to be employ'd in any service for God. Such a Man was Paul, he did not only spend his time in Preaching to others, in keeping others Vineyards, but he look'd to himself, kept his own Vineyard, 1 Cor. 9. 27. Left when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away. And what an eminent Instrument was he for God, he could turn his Hand to any work, he could dexterously manage both an adverse and prosperous Condition. I know how to abound, and how to suffer ; let the people despise him, it moves him not unless to indignation. Let them stone him, he can bear it : If a Man purge himself from these (saith he, 2 Tim. 2. 21.) he shall be a Vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work.

First, The Heart must be purged, and then it is prepared for any service of God. When the Heart of Isaiah was purified, which was the thing signified by the touching of his Lips with a Coal from the Altar Isa. 6. 7. then he was fit for God's Work : Here am I, send me, Verse 8. A Man that hath not learned to keep his Heart, put him upon any service for God and if it be attended with Honour it shall swell up and overtop his Spirit ; if with suffering, it will exanimate and sink him.

Jesus Christ had an instrumental fitness for his Father's Work above all the Servants that ever God employed.

employed, he was zealous in public Work for God, so zealous, that sometimes he forgot to eat bread, yea, that his Friends thought he had been beside himself. But yet he so carried on his publick Work, as not to forget his own private Communion with God; and therefore you read, Mat. xiv. 23. that when he had been labouring all Day, yet after that, he went up to a Mountain apart to pray. and was there alone. O let the Keepers of the Vineyards look to their own Vineyard! We shall never be so instrumental to the good of others, as when we are most diligent about our own Souls.

9. Mot. If the People of God would more diligently keep their Hearts, how exceedingly would the Communion of Saints be thereby sweetened.

How goodly then would be thy Tents O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles O Israel! then, as 'tis prophesied of the Jews, Zech. viii. 23. Men would say, we will go with you for we have heard that God is among you. 'Tis the Fellowship your Souls have with the Father, and with the Son, that draws out the Desires of others after Fellowship with you, 1 John i. 1, 3. I tell you, if Saints would be persuaded to take more pains, and spend more Time about their Hearts, there would quickly be such a divine Lustre upon the Face of their Conversations, that Men would account it no small Privilege to be with or near them.

'Tis the Pride, Passion, and Earthliness of our Hearts that hath spoiled Christian Fellowship. Where is it? That when Christians meet, they are often jarring and contending, but only from their unmortified Passions. Whence are their uncharitable Censures of their Brethren, but only from Self-ignorance? Why are they so rigid and unmerciful towards those that are fallen?

fallen? But because they consider not themselves, the Apostle speaks, Gal. vi. 1. Why is their Discourse so frothy and unprofitable when they meet? not this from the Earthliness and Vanity of the Hearts?

My Brethren, these be the Things that have spoiled Christian Fellowship, and made it become a dry and sapless Thing; so that many Christians are even wearied of it, and are ready to say with the Prophet, Jer. ix. O that I had a Cottage in the Wilderness, &c. That I might leave my People and go from them! And with David, Psal. cxx. 6. My Soul hath long dwelt with them that hate Peace. This hath made them long for the Grave, that they might go from them that are not their own People, to them that are their own People, as the Original of that Text imports, 2 Cor. v. 8.

And now, if Professors would study their own Hearts more, watch and keep them better, all this would be prevented; and the Beauty and Glory of Communion again restored. They would divide no more, contend no more, censure rashly no more; when their Hearts are in tune, their Tongues will not jar; how charitable, pitiful and tender will they be of one another when every one is daily humbled under the Evil of his own Heart; Lord hasten those much desired days and bless these Counsels in order to them.

10. Mot, Lastly, By this the Comforts of the Spirit, and precious Influences of all Ordinances would be fixed, and much longer preserved in your Souls than now they are.

Ah! what would I give, that my Soul might be preserved in that Frame I sometimes find it after an Ordinance. Aliquando intromittis me Domine in a
fectum

res, r Di et? the spoile y an wear ix. Th An t wi lon at a ow e Co Hear d b unio nter Hear har the vil day Sp oul oul t b r a at tun
Spectrum multum inusitatum introrsus ad nescio quam
dulcedinem, &c. Sometimes, O Lord, (saith one of
the Fathers sweetly) thou admittest me into the most
forward, unusual, and sweet Delights, to I know not
what Sweetness, which were it perfected in me, I
know not what it would be, or rather, what it would
not be. But alas! The Heart grows careless again,
and quickly returns, like Water removed from the
Fire, to its natural Coldness; could you but keep
those Things for ever in your Hearts, what Christians
would you be! what Lives would you live! and how
is it that these Things remain no longer with us?
Doubtless it is because we suffer our Hearts to be cold
again: We should be as careful after an Ordinance or
Duty to prevent this, as one that comes out of a hot
Bath, or great Sweat, is of going out into the chill
Air. We have our hot and cold Fits by turns, and
what is the Reason but our Unskilfulness and care-
lessness in keeping the Heart.

'Tis a thousand pities, that the Ordinances of God,
as to their quickening and comforting Effects, should
be like those human Ordinances the Apostle speaks of,
that perish in the using. O then, let me say to you,
as Job xv. 11. Do the Consolations of God seem small
to you? Look over these ten special Benefits, weigh
them in a just Ballance: Are they small Matters? Is
it a small Matter to have thy weak Understanding
assisted? Thy endangered Soul antidoted, thy Sin-
cerity cleared, thy Communion with God sweetened,
thy Sails filled in Prayer? Is it a small Thing to have
the decayed Power of Godliness again recovered, all
fatal Scandals removed, an instrumental Fitness to
serve Christ obtained, the Communion of Saints re-
stored to its primitive Glory, and the Influences of
Ordi-

Ordinances abiding in the Souls of Saints; if there be no common Blessings, no small Benefits, then surely 'tis a great Duty to keep the Heart with all Diligence

The III. Use for Direction.

THE next Use shall be for Direction to some spiritual Means for the keeping of the Heart; and here, besides what hath been hinted in the Explication of the Duty, Page 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. to which I refer the Reader, and all those Directions throughout the whole, appropriated to particular Cases and Seasons, I shall farther add several other general Means of excellent Use to this end; and the first is this.

1. Means. Would you thus keep your Hearts as hath been perswaded, then furnish your Hearts richly with the Word of God, which is their best Preservation against Sin.

Keep the Word and the Word will keep you: As the first receiving of the word regenerated your Hearts, so the keeping of the Word within you, will preserve your Hearts, Col. iii. 16. Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you; let it dwell, not tarry with you for a Night, and let it dwell richly, or plentifully; in all that is of it, in its commands, promises, threats; in all that is in you, in your understandings, memories, consciences, affections, and then 'twill preserve your Hearts, Psal. cxix. 11. Thy Word have I hid in mine Heart, that I might not sin against thee: 'Tis the Slipperiness of our Hearts, in reference to the Word; that

that causes so many Slips in our Lives. Conscience cannot be urged, or awed with forgotten Truths; but keep it in the Heart, and it will keep both Heart and life upright: Psal. xxxvii. 31. The Law of his God in his Heart; none of his Steps shall slide; or if he do, the Word will recover the straying Heart again, Mat. xxvi. 57. Then Peter remembered (the Words of Jesus) and wept bitterly: We never lose our Hearts 'till they have first lost the efficacious and powerful Impressions of the Word.

2. Mea. Call your Hearts frequently to an Account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.

Those that put a Stock into the Hands of unfaithful or suspicious Servants, will be sure to make short reckonings with them; the Heart is deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked, Jer. xvii. 9. Ours is as necessary, as sweet, that we and our reins, that is, we and our secret thoughts should confer together every Night, Psal. xvi. 7. We should call our Hearts to account every Evening, and say, O my Heart! Where hast thou been to Day? Where have thy Thoughts wandered to Day? What Account canst thou give of them? O naughty Heart, vain Heart, couldst thou not abide by the Fountain of Delights? Is there better Entertainment with the Creature than with God? The oftener the Heart meets with rebukes and checks for wandring, the less 'twill wander; if every vain Thought were retracted with a Sigh, every Excursion of the Heart from God, with a severe check, it would not dare so boldly and frequently to digress and step aside; those Actions which are committed with reluctancy, are not committed with frequency.

3. Mea. He that will keep his Heart, must take heed of plunging himself into such a multiplicity of earthly

earthly Business, as he cannot manage without neglecting his main Business.

It cannot be imagined he should keep his Heart with God, that hath lost himself in a Wood of earthly Business; take heed you do not pinch your Souls, by gratifying the immoderate Desires of your Flesh. I wish

many Christians could truly say what an He *Seneca*. then once did, I do not give, but only lend myself to my Business. 'Tis said Germanicus reigned in the Romans Hearts, Tyberius only in the Provinces. Though the World be in your Hands, let it not juggle Christ out of your Hearts.

Take heed, Christian, lest thy Shop steal away thy Heart from thy Closet: God never intended earthly Employments for a Stop, but rather for a Step to heavenly Ones. O let not Aristippus the Heathen rise in Judgment against thee, who said, He would rather neglect his Means than his Mind, his Farm than his Soul. If thy Ship be over-laden, thou must cast some overboard; more Business than thou canst well manage, like more Meat than thou canst well digest, which will quickly make a sickly Soul.

4. Mea. He that means to keep his Heart, will carefully observe its first declinings from God, and stop it there.

He that will find his House in good Repair, must stop every Chink as soon as discovered, and he that will keep his Heart, must not let a vain Thought be long neglected: The Serpent of Heart-Apostasie, is best killed in the Egg of a small Remission. O if many poor decayed Christians had looked to their Hearts in time, they had never come to that sad pass they now are: We may say of Heart-neglects, as the Apostle doth of vain Babblings, that they increase to more and

more

more Ungodliness. Nemo repente fit turpissimus, little things neglected will quickly become great and masterful: The greatest Crocodile once lay in an Egg, the greatest Oak was once but an Acorn. The firing of a small Train of Powder may blow up all by leading to a greater quantity. Men little think what a proud, vain, wanton or worldly Thought may grow to: Behold how great a Matter a little Fire kindles!

5. Mea. Take heed of losing the liveliness and sweetness of your Communion with God, lest thereby your Hearts be loosed off from God.

The Heart is an hungry and restless Thing, it will have something to feed upon; if it enjoy nothing from God, it will hunt for something among the Creatures, and there it often loses itself, as well as its end. There is nothing more engages the Heart to a constancy and steadiness in walking with God, than the Sweetness which it tastes therein: As the Gauls, when once they tasted the sweet Wines of Italy, could never be satisfied 'till they conquered that Country where it grew.

'Tis true, Conscience of Duty may keep the Heart from neglecting it, but when there is no higher Motive, it drives on deadly, and is filled with Distractions; that which we delight in, we are never weary of, as is evident in the Motion of the Heart in earthly Things, where the Wheels being oiled with Delight, run nimbly, and have often need of triggings; the Motions of the Heart upward would be as free, if its Delight in heavenly Things were as great.

6. Mea. Habituate thy Heart to spiritual Meditations, if thou wouldst have it freed from those burthensome Diversions.

By this Means you will get a Facility and Dexterity in Heart-work: 'Tis Pity those smaller Portions of our
Time

Time betwixt solemn Duties should lie upon our Har
and be rendered useleſs to us. O learn to ſave,
be good Huſbands upon your Thoughts; to this P

Boyle's occa- poſe, a neat Author ſpeaks, " Th
ſional Reflect. " Parentheſes which happen to co
pag. 9, 10. " between the more ſolemn Paſſa
" (whether Buſineſs or Recreations)

" human-Life, are wont to be loſt
" moſt Men: for want of a due Value for them, a
" even by good Men, for want of Skill to preſer
" them: For though they do not properly deſp
" them, yet they neglect or loſe them for want
" knowing how to reſcue them, or what they do w
" them; but although Grains of Sand, and Aſhes
" a part, but of a deſpicable Smallneſs, and liable
" be ſcattered and blown away, yet the ſkilful Ar
" ficer by a vehement Fire brings Numbers of the
" to afford him that noble ſubſtance Glaſs, by who
" Help we may both ſee ourſelves, and our Blemiſh
" lively repreſented, (as in Looking-Glaſſes) and d
" cern cœleſtial Objects (as with Telescopes) and wi
" the Sun-Beams kindle diſpoſed materials (as wi
" Burning-Glaſſes;) ſo when theſe little Fragment
" or Parcels of Time, which if not carefully look
" to, would be diſſipated and loſt, come to be manage
" by a ſkilful Contemplator, and to be improved b
" the cœleſtial Fire of Devotion, they may be ſo o
" dered as to afford us both Looking-Glaſſes to dre
" our Souls by, and Proſpectives to diſcover heavn
" Wonders, and Incentives to inflame our Hear
" with Zeal: Thus far he.

Something of that Nature I have under-hand, fo
a publick Benefit, if God give Life to finiſh, and

Oppor

Opportunity to produce it : Certainly this is a great advantage for the keeping of the Heart with God.

IV. *Use for Consolation.*

I Shall now close the whole with a Word or two of Consolation to all diligent and serious Christians, that faithfully and closely ply Heart-work ; that are groaning and weeping in secret over the hardness, pride, earthliness and vanity of their Hearts ; that are fearing and trembling over the experienced deceitfulness, and falseness of them, whilst other vain Professors Eyes are abroad, their Time and Strength eaten up by fruitless Disputes, and earthly Employments ; or at best by a cold and formal Performance of some heartless and empty Duties : Poor Christian, I have three Things to offer thee in order to thy support and comfort, and doubtless either of them alone mixed with Faith is sufficient to comfort thee over all the Trouble thou hast with thine own Heart.

I. Comfort. This argues thy Heart to be upright and honest, whatever thy other Gifts and Abilities are.

'Tis uprightness of Heart that will comfort thee upon a Death-Bed, 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. Then he turned his Face to the Wall and prayed to the Lord, saying, Remember now O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, &c. I am really of his Mind, who said, Si mihi daretur optio, eligerim Christiani rustici fordidissimum & maxime agreste opus præ omnibus victoriis & triumphis Alexandri & Cæsaris. Might I have my Wish, I would prefer

prefer the most despicable and fordid Work of a rick Christian, before all the Victories and Triumphs of Alexander, or Cæsar; Yea, let me add, before all the elaborated Duties and excellent Gifts of vain Professors; before the Tongues of Men and Angels: will signify more to my comfort, to spend one solitary Hour in mourning before the Lord over Heart-corruption, than many Hours in a seeming jealous, but really dead Performance of common Duties, with the greatest Enlargements and richest Embellishments of Parts and Gifts.

By this very Thing Christ distinguishes the formal and serious Christian, Mat. vi. 5. The one is for the Street and Synagogue, for the Observation and Applause of Men, but the other is a Closet Man; he drives on a home Trade, a Heart Trade. Never be troubled then for the want of those Things that a Man may have and be eternally damned, but rather bless God for that which none but the Favourites and Darlinglings of Heaven have; many a one is now in Hell that had a better Head than thine, and many a one now in Heaven, that complained of as bad an Heart as thine.

2. Com. Know farther for thy Comfort, That God would never leave thee under so many Heart-Troubles and Burnings, if he intend not thy real Benefit thereby.

Thou art often crying out, Lord why is it thus? why go I a mourning all the Day, having Sorrow in my Heart? thus long have I been exercised with hardness of Heart, and to this Day have not obtained a broken Heart; many Years have I been praying and striving against vain Thoughts, yet am still infested and perplexed with them. O when shall I get a better Heart! I have been in Travail, and brought forth

Wind, I have obtained no Deliverance, neither
the Corruptions of my Heart fallen. I have
ought this Heart many Times to Prayers, Sermons,
aments, expecting and hoping for a Cure from
it, and still my Sore runneth, and ceaseth not.
Sensive Soul, let this comfort thee, thy God de-
thy Benefit, even by these Occasions of thy sad
complaints. For, (1.) Hereby he would let thee see
that thy Heart by Nature is and was, and therein
notice how much thou art beholding to free
ce. He leaves thee under these Exercises of Spi-
rit that thou mayest be as with thy Face upon the
ground, admiring that ever the Lord of Glory should
take such a Toad, so vile a Creature into his Bosom.
thy base Heart, if it be good for nothing else, yet
des to commend and set off the unsearchable Riches
of Free Grace. (2.) This serves to beat thee off con-
stantly from resting, yea, or but glancing upon thine
own Righteousness, or Excellency: The Corruption
of thy Heart, working in all thy Duties, makes thee
incapable to feel that the Bed is too short, and the
chamber too narrow: Were it not for those Reflections
that hast after Duties upon the dulness and Distractions
of thine Heart in them, how apt wouldst thou be to
be in love with, and admire thine own Performances
and Enlargements? For if notwithstanding these, thou
do much to do with the Pride of thy Heart: how
much more if such humbling and self-abasing Con-
tritions were wanting. And lastly, This tends to
make thee the more compassionate and tender towards
others; Perhaps thou wouldst have little Pity for the
distresses, and Soul-Troubles of others, if thou hadst
experience of thine own.

3. Com. To conclude, God will shortly p
blessed End to all these Troubles, Cares and W
ings.

The Time is coming when thy Heart shall b
thou wouldst have it, when thou shalt be discha
of these Cares, Fears and Sorrows, and never cry
Oh my hard, my proud, my vain my earthly H
any more. When all Darknes shall be banished
thine understanding, and thou shalt clearly discove
Truths in God, that crystal Ocean of Truth: V
all Vanity shall be purged perfectly out of
Thoughts, and they be everlastingly, ravishingly,
delightfully entertained and exercised upon tha
preme Goodness, and infinite Excellency of God,
whom they shall never start any more like a br
Bow. And as for thy Pride, Passion, earthlinefs,
all other the matters of thy Complaint and Tro
it shall be said of them as of the Egyptians to M
Stand still, and see the Salvation of God. These
ruptions thou seest to Day, henceforth thou shalt
them no more for ever :

When thou shalt lay down thy Weapons of Pray
Tears and Groans, and put on the Armour of Li
not to fight but to triumph in.

Lord, when shall this blessed Day come? H
long? How long? Holy and True, My Soul wa
for thee: Come my Beloved, and be thou like a R
or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Be
Amen.



F I N I S.